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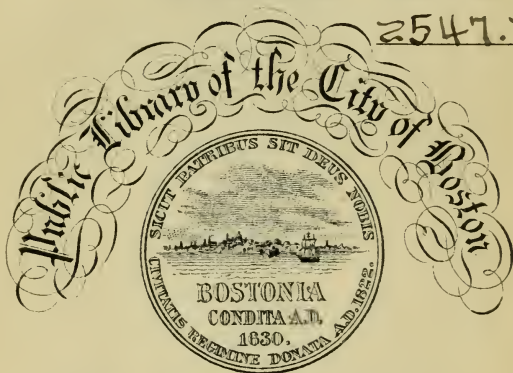


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*Yours very affectionately*  
*A. Bennett*

# THE CHRISTIAN GOVERNESS :

## A Memoir

AND A SELECTION FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MISS SARAH BENNETT,

LATE OF MELTON MOWBRAY.

By GEORGE B. BENNETT, B.A.,

CURATE OF FLEET, LINCOLNSHIRE.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION BY THE REV. R. H. COBBOLD, M.A.

RECTOR OF BROSELEY, SALOP; FORMERLY ARCHDEACON OF NINGPO.

*The Profits will be given to the Church Missionary Society.*

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## PREFACE.

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THE writer of this memoir feels that an explanation of the delay which has occurred in its publication is due to those friends of the late Miss Bennett, at whose suggestion it was undertaken. Protracted indisposition, and an accident of a serious nature, rendered it necessary to lay it altogether aside for some months.

He is aware that it now appears with many imperfections, but trusts that its lack of pretension to literary merit will not diminish its usefulness.

He gladly avails himself of this opportunity of thanking those who have kindly placed letters at his disposal; and especially does he wish thus publicly to acknowledge the exceedingly valuable assistance which he has received in the compilation of the work from Mr Wing, of Melton Mowbray, a brother-in-law of Miss Bennett.

It is sent forth with the earnest prayer that, by the power of the Holy Ghost, it may be a means of stimulating some to strive after greater attainments in holiness and usefulness, by following the example of the subject of it so far as she followed Christ.



## INTRODUCTION.

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IF the subject of the following memoir may not be ranked among the heroines of our day, it is simply because she was not called to occupy a high and prominent position among her contemporaries. The title of the book tells what rank she held in society: the work itself will develop how truly the term "Christian" applied to her.

If ever there was a person whose "insensible influence" was widely felt, it was Miss Bennett. This was her chief charm—in this consisted her great power. She seemed to fulfil the apostolic injunction of "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." The reason of this was her habitual reference to the standard of truth, to the example and precept of Christ. Upon Him she continually leaned, from Him she continually drew her supplies. She was indeed "a branch abiding in the vine, and so bringing forth much fruit." All who knew her felt that the image of Christ was in no faint type impressed upon her.

There are some persons who are burning and shining lights; they amaze us by the talent they display, the quantity of work they get through, the trials they successfully encounter, the enemies they triumphantly over-

come. Placed in the forefront of the battle, called to be leaders of the people, they achieve mighty results for their country, their religion, and the interests of humanity. We stand, as it were, at a distance from them, and admire their greatness, without having any power to follow in their exact footsteps. We find, however, this, which is of value to us, the help which carried them through, is the same grace which is given to help us in doing our work, or in bearing our cross. Their lives are useful to us, not as urging us to do precisely the same deeds, so much as suggesting to us to do our work, whatever that work be, in the same spirit. So, indeed, was it with the greatest life of all. The Lord's miracles of power we cannot perform; His authoritative teaching we may not assert; but His holy pattern we are required to imitate. "He left us an example that we should follow His steps." We can copy Him here, walking in the blessed steps of His most holy life. In all, therefore, that is essential to the formation of religious character, and the performance of the duties of a Christian life, Miss Bennett may as truly be our example as the greatest heroine, and, indeed, by calling our attention almost exclusively to the quieter virtues, and in illustrating them by her conduct, her life, though not of such deep interest to the general reader, may become of singular advantage to those who move in humbler and more retired walks.

The Christian is well said to serve God most truly in the smaller duties of his station,—in those duties which make up his every-day life. It is in these that his religion is most decidedly manifested. He might be a hero abroad from a desire of worldly renown; he will hardly



be a hero at home unless he be acting from right principle. The cross which our Lord has told us we must bear after Him is a daily cross. The Christian is one who "crucifies the flesh with the affections and lusts." Whoever does this, though even a cottage be his home, and a common labourer his calling, cannot fail to exercise a most important influence in his generation. It was this constant crucifixion with Christ, this entire surrender of herself to her Lord, this habitual living upon Him, which gave Miss Bennett her power. A close observer would say, even after years of close intercourse, that he had discovered no act, no word, no look, which was unworthy of a Christian.

I believe the tongue of slander never assailed her. However mistaken her strictness with regard to worldly amusements might appear to some, yet it was never scornfully said, she indulges in her own peculiar vanities, and is blind to them, while she denounces so emphatically what she professes to see so clearly sinful in others. Never did I hear it suggested, nor do I believe that even malignity would venture to suggest that she should "cast out first the beam out of her own eye." In dress, in deportment, in conversation, in habits of life, in attention to daily duties, she gave no handle to the charge of inconsistency.

There was, besides this singleness of purpose, this consistency of walk, no telling why she gained, as she is admitted to have gained, such influence over her pupils. Though her friends describe her as good-looking in her youth, yet, till you became acquainted with her, there was nothing fascinating, I could hardly call it prepossessing, in her manner, which would seem to warrant the supposi-

tion that young persons would be ready to form an attachment with her. Yet her influence not only pervaded her school, but all society in which she mixed. I have called it "insensible influence." The term best describes her power over others. She was always at work, she felt that nothing was so minute that it might be disregarded or omitted ; she seemed to say, if the Lord numbers the very hairs of our head in His care over us, we ought to number carefully the minutest thoughts of our hearts in our service to Him.

When it was rumoured that this memoir was about to be published, I, in common with many others, was inclined to regret it, for though I had many opportunities from personal observation of knowing the work she was doing, and though I valued exceedingly her friendship, and profited greatly by her delightful correspondence, I yet thought it could hardly be right to drag so private a Christian, with simply a blameless walk, and great earnestness of purpose in her sphere to recommend her, before a critical public. My objections, however, are softened down, if they are not entirely removed. I have felt that the bare story of Miss Bennett's consistent life, and her most spiritually-toned letters, might do even more good than a biography founded upon more graphic incidents. It will serve to teach, (I thought,) how beneficial, under Divine grace, a Christian life in a humble sphere may be ; it will encourage many to aim at a higher spirituality of conduct.

In reading the memoir, hardly one will fail to say, I might have done this, had I only been as diligent in seeking help as she was. All mothers of families, all elder

sisters, all grown-up daughters, all teachers of the young, will rise from the reading of this volume with the conviction that a possible pattern has been set before them, and that they have only to attain the same humble and dependent spirit successfully to imitate it.

R. H. C.

BROSELEY RECTORY, *Oct. 24, 1862.*



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CHAPTER I.

Early Days.

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“ In thee the fatherless findeth mercy.”—HOSEA xiv. 3.





## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY DAYS.

THE Bible, in describing the excellence and attractiveness of a holy life, declares in general terms that "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." And whilst in many portions of its sacred pages the subject is expatiated upon in detail, it is also illustrated by brilliant examples of those who have walked in "the good and the right way," faithfully portraying their character, and setting forth their blessedness.

In the Old Testament, we find temporal advancement renders the bright course of steadfast obedience more striking, as in the cases of Joseph and Daniel. But this is not always to be looked for; indeed, from the New Testament we learn rather to expect persecution and tribulation on the path of the righteous; and they are counted happy who thus endure. For, under the dispensation of the Spirit, the fair picture of Christian career which invites our pursuit, is the gradual advancement in

likeness to Him who was a suffering as well as a mighty Saviour,—at once the “Man of Sorrows” and “the King of Glory,” “the altogether lovely.”

And to those the eyes of whose understandings have been enlightened by the Spirit of God to perceive the beauty of holiness, it is delightful to observe the transforming power of the Holy Ghost, subduing the corrupt inclinations of our fallen nature, correcting its faults, and clothing the renewed soul with the graces which shone so brilliantly in the life and character of our Divine Example. The lion becomes the lamb; the fearful grow bold and fearless in God’s service; and the harsh and selfish become gentle, benevolent, and tender-hearted; not all at once, it may be, but gradually, they grow in conformity to the likeness of Christ, going “from strength to strength.”

Peter, for example, had learned many things of his Divine Master; but still, how little advancement in the meekness and gentleness required of a disciple did he shew in the garden of Gethsemane! And at the palace of the high priest, had not the pity of his Saviour arrested his declension, he would have fallen into the sin of apostasy. But afterwards, how did he increase in faith and boldness, strengthening his brethren, as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; and how must we see in him the image of the heavenly, if we look at his portrait as it appears in his epistlès! Amongst the innumerable mercies which demand our thankfulness, it is not the least that the Scriptures give us the varied experience of believers in their progressive sanctification. The lives of the saints, recorded in the simplicity of truth, as by the

inspired writers, form a precious treasure of the Church. In them we have unerring delineations of character; and the subjects, selected by infinite wisdom, are precisely such as we require, affording all necessary warning, instruction, and encouragement. Here the conflicts between the powers of light and darkness are recorded; the manner of God's dealings with men is illustrated; and every practical lesson is taught by example, that our minds may be powerfully impressed and stored with spiritual wisdom, and we become thoroughly furnished for making progress in our heavenward course.

It is deeply to be regretted that this is not more highly prized and more diligently improved; and some caution is necessary, lest the abundance of other history divert and engross attention, to the neglect of those examples and records of experience which Holy Writ affords.\* From these considerations, this memoir would not have been compiled, had not circumstances afforded a special occasion: the extensive demand for it gives promise of its usefulness, and is some assurance of the interest that may accompany its perusal. Besides which, it is felt that the same Spirit who influenced the hearts and moulded the characters of those whose principles and manner of life

\* It would be well if the practice of the holy Henry Martyn were adopted by Christians:—

“So deep was his veneration for the Word of God, that, when a suspicion arose in his mind that any other book he might be studying was about to gain an undue influence over his affections, he instantly laid it aside; nor would he resume it until he had felt and realised the paramount excellence of the Divine oracles; he could not rest satisfied till all those lesser lights which were beginning to dazzle him had disappeared before the effulgence of the Scriptures of God.”

are shewn in the Old and New Testaments, is still, as the Author of all godliness, doing His work in God's people, rendering some of them living epistles to be "known and read of all men." And as, during life, their light so shone before men that many were induced to yield themselves unto the Lord, would it not be an error, when they who have been so successful in leading others to God have gone hence, to bury in oblivion such monuments of His grace; or to cover under a bushel the exemplary lives of those who have been made eminently useful in the Church of Christ?

Moreover, it must be observed, that there are different spheres in which God's servants have their particular influence, and do their work; and surely, if only within such limits, it is profitable to preserve the remembrance of them.

What can be more fitting employment for an intelligent creature, than the contemplation of the works of his great Creator,—either those pertaining to the material world, or the things of the spiritual kingdom? The former we are not permitted to see and admire in their original purity and perfection; nevertheless, devout minds cannot fail to be much interested in them; since the works of God's fingers so abound with charms of beauty and harmony, that the more they are contemplated, the more they "swell the tide of grateful feeling," which we desire should rise higher and higher in our souls.

But there is yet another sphere of divine operation, where all the attributes of Deity are engaged, and in which mankind has a still deeper interest—the kingdom of grace. There are mysteries here which "angels desire

to look into," and in which man beholds the wondrous scheme for his recovery from the curse, and the manner of his restoration to all forfeited good. Great as are the wonders of creation, those of redemption and the new creation are still greater. There are blights which, by reason of man's sin, have fallen upon the natural world; but alas! these are but symptoms of a far greater evil,—the moral wreck and world-wide degeneracy consequent upon transgression. And to restore mankind to their former favoured condition, and from the universal ruin to raise up "a spiritual house," in which, consistently with His attributes of justice and holiness, He can delight, is emphatically God's great work. Nothing less than infinite mercy could prompt it, infinite wisdom devise it, and infinite love and power accomplish it. The Scriptures reveal the manner in which a way of return was made;—how mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other;—and how sinners afar off from the Divine favour, may be brought nigh and be made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. And in God's dealings with His people from age to age, in calling them to be partakers of this "great salvation," the work is carried on. Here, in the experience of believers, in the providence that attends them, the discipline to which they are subjected, the production of the graces of the Holy Spirit in their souls, and the savour of grace they are made unto others—all tending to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes of the true tabernacle,—here, we assert, are the works of God which possess the deepest interest, far exceeding the operations of His hands in the material universe.

If then the dealings of God with His people, His work in their individual souls, the grace by which they shine as lights in the world, both in doing good and meekly suffering affliction, and their success in winning souls, furnish subjects for contemplation as edifying as they are delightful, the following narrative and letters we confidently hope will, under the Divine blessing, be profitable to the reader. For the subject of this memoir was eminently an instrument in God's hands of turning many to righteousness; and it is with the conviction that her life will be made a farther blessing that the attempt is made to trace her journey through this probationary world, and to record some of the incidents wherein she appeared as a burning and shining light, and an exemplification of "whatsoever things are lovely." Having had numerous and most favourable opportunities of observing her consistent and devoted walk, afforded not only by residence in the same town, but also by the privilege of dwelling under the same roof, we do not hesitate to speak with confidence of her Christian character. We are aware that we shall be exposed to the imputation of partiality, so commonly cast upon biographers, since we have but little to say of failings; but, however much it is our wish to follow the truthful example of the sacred writers, and state the faults as well as the virtues of an individual, yet, as has been remarked of another, "suspicious though it be to omit, imperfections cannot be mentioned when they have not been observed." The cases are comparatively few in which grace so completely triumphs. It is a painful fact, much to be deplored, that an intimate acquaintance, even with true believers, generally reveals the incongruity of



some spot, more or less disfiguring an otherwise fair Christian profession.\* In one, an undue attachment to this world's goods is the spirit of evil,—manifesting the want of a sincere recognition of the fact that all we have is God's, and ought to be used for Him, and with a single eye to His glory,—thus hindering the work of grace in his own soul, robbing the gospel of its reputation, and perhaps unconsciously frustrating his earnest endeavours to recommend its glad tidings to others. In another, pride on account of wealth, position, or superiority of intellect, is cherished in the heart; whilst it is sincerely sought to entertain in the same breast the lowly Jesus, “the Son of the carpenter,” to imitate whose humility is one of the first signs of submission to His authority. Another is chargeable with a degree of indolence that is incompatible with obedience to the gospel requirements of redeeming the time, of self-denial, and of zealous devotion to the interests of Messiah's kingdom. Again, we are sometimes offended with a harsh, unchristian manner, and a want of ready, warm, Christ-like sympathy and unmistakable love to the brethren; whilst all the other marks of a faithful man may seem to be present.† And must we not admit that we too seldom meet with a brother offended or injured who promptly returns good for evil, and, at his own cost, or to the violation of his natural feelings, makes overtures for peace, according to the teaching of Christ? These things ought not so to be; but,

\* “They shine; but like a lamp where the flame gleams dimly through foul and smoky glass.”—*Guthrie*.

† “If the world's enmity to God and His image is such that a Christian is not a man loved, be it so; but let him be *lovely* and *loving*—let him be like Christ.”—*Guthrie*.

alas! they are: the consciences of the weak are wounded thereby; those who may have been just awakened to a sense of the importance of spiritual things stumble at the evident inconsistency; and the enemies of the Lord find therein occasion to blaspheme. This is humiliating truth which God's people would do well to take to heart, that henceforth they may through grace aim at a higher standard, and at any cost of personal feeling, position, or property, endeavour without reserve to imitate our Divine Master, who left us an example that we should follow His steps. When, therefore, Christians whose sincere prayers and persevering efforts are that they may be able to follow the Lord fully, whose souls are filled with the love of Christ, and who long to see more of His likeness in His followers,\* are so frequently disappointed in their search for an individual in whom no glaring defect exists, what a happy relief it is to meet with some one possessed of apparently unblemished consistency! Such it may be said, however, to all human observation, was the subject of this memoir. It is the unanimous testimony of those among whom she dwelt, that no failing like any of those above mentioned could be charged on this beloved follower of the Lord Jesus. The statement may appear too full of praise, but it is only "to the praise of the glory of His grace;" and, therefore, we record it, that her spiritual attainments can only be adequately described by saying that she had no *visible* defect. In this probably, under God, lies the secret of her remarkable influence with others. The following letter from the Lady E. O——, in whose family she was many years a gover-

\* 1 John ii. 5, 6.



ness, corroborates our assertion, and we insert it as an introduction to the narrative. Upon receiving the announcement of Miss Bennett's death, her Ladyship thus writes in reply to her sister:—

“DEAR MRS W——,—What can we say but, ‘It is the Lord?’ Sad, sad indeed, is it to part with one to whom we were so greatly attached! Oh! what a consistent Christian (unselfish) course was hers! During the years that we lived under the same roof, and were so incessantly together, I cannot remember one act, or one word in which human infirmity was visible; the grace of God was so largely poured out in her heart, she was kept so watchful, so prayerful, that hers was a most holy and unselfish walk. Her one aim in life was to be conformed to His will. I have always felt that when she left us, because she thought her work was done there, and took the school at Melton, it was done entirely ‘unto the Lord,’—in a missionary spirit—to train souls for Christ; and truly did He, in His mercy, fulfil her desire. How many of those young pupils died in the Lord, and how many now live a life of faith, and bless His holy name that they were ever under her roof! It was remarkable how she was looked up to at Melton, as a light, and a rallying one to those who desired to serve the Lord. In a measure you must be aware of this; but, perhaps, you scarcely know how the different clergymen spoke of her usefulness to my sister at B——, both those living at Melton, and those who were brought there on behalf of any societies they advocated there. . . . It is, indeed, a great loss and blank in a family when such a Christian is taken from

earth to heaven. May the Lord support you!—Yours,  
dear Mrs W., in much sympathy,

“E. O——.”

MISS SARAH BENNETT was born at Spalding, in Lincolnshire, on the 4th of March, 1797. Her father was an architect and builder there, and her mother was a daughter of a tradesman in good circumstances, who lived at Melton Mowbray. At the time of their marriage there was a prospect of affluence; but the former died at the age of thirty-eight, leaving a family of eight children; and, from the hazardous character of the work, the contracts which Mr Bennett entered into had proved so ruinous, that this large family was left entirely dependent on the widow's exertions. The difficulties were great, and the future was, to the eye of sense, appalling; but remarkable prudence, united with faith in God, characterised the surviving parent; and many friends were raised up to be channels of mercies to this inheritor of the promises made to the widow and fatherless. Mrs Bennett, with the aid of a friend, (until her eldest son, then only twelve years of age, was able to give assistance,) conducted the business in the humbler and safer departments; and thus struggled on, and maintained her children. Her daughter, Sarah, who was seven years of age at the time of her father's death, was kindly taken by her good godfather, a solicitor at Spalding, and by him sent to his sister's school at Camden House, Kensington; where she remained to receive an accomplished education, and where in this respect, as well as in religious principles, the foundation of her future usefulness was laid. The considerate manner in which the offer of this

kindness was made, manifested the spirit of true benevolence which prompted it; and the incident is worthy of notice, because in a remote occurrence the finger of God is now so strikingly seen to have been directing a course of special providence, for the accomplishment of His gracious purposes with respect to the subject of this memoir. The gentleman who thus befriended the widow, did it, he said, in grateful remembrance of a similar benefit conferred upon his brother by Miss Bennett's grandfather, who took and educated him when left fatherless. The blessing of her that was ready to perish came also upon the remainder of the family; they were all ultimately provided for, proving the truth of St Paul's assertion, that godliness has "promise of the life that now is," as well as of that which is to come. This pious mother fully realised the responsibility of her position. Her chief desire and constant aim were to train up her children for God. She not only knew the duty of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, but also believed the promise, graciously attached thereto by the Saviour, that all needful things should be added. How anxiously she watched for the first signs of the work of grace in their hearts can only be known by parents who have felt the same. It was not long, however, before she received a proof that her prayers had come up before God, and that her efforts had not been in vain. Her eldest daughter gave unmistakable evidence of being born from above; and, to make her influence for good the greater during her brief sojourn here, she was gifted with extraordinary power of intellect. But it proved that this child, like many such, was an exotic, soon to be transplanted

and "bloom in fields of light." The Lord had need of this flower, and at the age of eighteen she was removed to be for ever with Him.

Sarah was twelve years old when her sister died; and, if we consider the feelings produced when death makes the first breach in a young family, we shall readily suppose that this solemn event spoke to her as a message from God, and made an impression on her mind not easily to be erased. That wise Father, who orders "all things" for His children's benefit, and "from seeming evil still educes good," gave this trial a prominent place among the things which were to lead her heartily to acknowledge Him as her Father, and to conduce to the first decided formation of her Christian character. This, we believe, was her first seriously-received lesson in the school of affliction. Nothing of an earlier date is known of her religious impressions; and at this time her mind was much exercised with reflection. When her sister's death occurred she herself had been seized by illness, which at one time it was feared would terminate fatally; and a year or two elapsed before her health was fully re-established. Other circumstances operated at the same time to teach her true wisdom; and the result was a fixed and happy choice of the Lord for her portion. Besides the loss of her sister and her own sickness, the threatening aspect of France and the apprehension of war on our own soil filled her mind with serious considerations, and increased her frequency and earnestness in prayer.\* She

\* At this time the inhabitants of the district in which Miss Bennett resided were much alarmed by the expectation that the army of Napoleon I. would land by flat-bottomed boats on the shores of the

was under the training of an unseen Tutor, who was making her at this early age an apt scholar in divine things; and thus she was led again and again to flee to, and finally to abide in, that refuge which alone is unfailling. Thus the widow's heart, which had been sorely distressed by the pangs of parting with her first-born, both in nature and grace, was made to sing again for joy by the gift of another born of the Spirit, who was to be a chief solace to her during the remainder of her pilgrimage. Her anxieties for this member of her family she now felt to be gone, inasmuch as she had taken Him for the guide of her youth, who never fails to help and govern those whom He brings up in His steadfast fear and love. She frequently expressed herself to that effect, saying, "I have no cares on Sarah's account, for she is a child of God."

When Miss Bennett's education was completed at Camden House, she undertook the duties of governess in the family of a surgeon in Suffolk. How she was appreciated here, and her "manner of life" in this her first responsible charge, may be inferred from the poignant grief at her decease, expressed in the following letter from her former pupil, with whom she always kept up a correspondence. Evidently, distance of time and place could not diminish the affectionate regard which had been inspired:—

*" March 19, 1861.*

"MY DEAR MRS W——,—I cannot tell the severe shock I experienced this morning at receiving a card to Wash. Parish meetings were called, and every arrangement made for the conveyance of women and children, and the driving of stock farther inland, and for the destruction of such food and fodder as could not be removed, in the event of invasion.

apprise me of the departure of your much-loved sister. I feel I must write, though my eyes are dimmed with tears, to assure you of my deep sympathy. I loved her as a sister, and shall never know her like again. I can imagine how peacefully she resigned her spirit into the hands of her Saviour and Redeemer. I deeply feel for you all, but there is delightful reflection, knowing she is 'in perfect peace,' as she quite lived above the world, and our loss is her eternal gain. How frequently has she consoled and comforted me in my various trials! And she was always so interested in me and all that concerned me. I can write no more than to express my hope, that you may all be supported in this your trial. Accept my kind love, and believe me, dear Mrs W——, your sincere friend,

C. J——."

Having concluded this engagement, she undertook the education of the daughters of a gentleman in Lincolnshire. She had scarcely held this situation two years, when a circumstance occurred to test those high principles which, as a servant of God, she had determined should influence her whole conduct. The ladies by whom she had been educated, left Camden House, and opened an establishment in Spalding, in which it was thought Miss Bennett would be to them a most valuable assistant. It appeared much against her interest to enter into this arrangement; but one of her young charge going with her, and a governess being provided for the others, a sense of duty excluded every selfish consideration, and she unhesitatingly transferred her services. She remained here about eight years, where, if some disadvantages existed,



they were confronted with many happy compensations. In this stage of her career she had the chief intercourse with her mother, whose unfeigned faith she could never call to mind without being filled with joy, and whose memory she ever cherished, as of one who adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. In the tenderest ties of relationship, holy influence and invaluable counsel were reciprocated; and this, with a parent whom she so loved and admired, not only tended at the time to confirm the young Christian in her devotion to the Saviour and to promote her growth in grace, but also afforded a retrospect in after-life, as strengthening as it was delightful. We must observe the kind providence of God in thus comforting the widow, and by this engagement, with the accompanying circumstances, preparing the daughter for her increasingly important positions in which, under the Great Head of the Church, she would be afterwards occupied feeding His lambs. The school at Spalding was at length given up, and Miss Bennett, who had taken a principal part in the superintendence of it, was set at liberty. The experience which she had gained, and the progress of the work of grace in her soul during this engagement, were an early reward for the self-denial which she exercised in entering upon it.

Her next appointment was in the family of an excellent clergyman in Suffolk; but, for reasons which it is unnecessary to state, she held it only a short time. Yet, in so eventful a Christian life, even this change would have an important bearing. We can scarcely watch the dealings of our heavenly Father with this child of grace, without seeing His wisdom and goodness manifested at

every step of her earthly career. Here, at least, fresh experience would be obtained in the discharge of the important duties of her calling: and her eager mind would treasure up, in the spirit of the gospel householder, the valuable maxims and principles of conduct, which it would be her privilege to see inculcated, whilst under the roof of a wise and faithful pastor. Doubtless, He whom she had taken as her guide, placed her in this portion of His vineyard for her better preparation for what was next to follow.

Up to this period little is known of minor incidents. But she was now about to enter upon her last and longest engagement in a private family, during which her correspondence affords a fuller history; and it may be truly referred to as the record of her soul's "sunny memories." The fiery cloudy pillar moved, and our friend struck her tent and journeyed onwards. She prayed for guidance, and her prayer was answered. She was led into a path which was truly one of pleasantness; inasmuch as therein she not only received the kindest attention to her temporal comfort, but was privileged to enjoy the society of experienced pilgrims, who encouraged her in her journey heavenwards, whose family arrangements were such as to prove that their desire was to fulfil the law of Christ, and who, like Abraham, commanded their children and their household that they should keep the way of the Lord.

In the early part of the year 1827, she was favourably mentioned to General O——, who required the assistance of a lady in the education of his children; and, after a personal interview, she received the appointment. In after years she frequently amused her friends with a



description of the introduction, which she unnecessarily regarded as something formidable. Her timidity and humble estimate of herself created some nervous feeling. Such was her diffidence that it was a comfort to her, she has often said, to have had her countenance somewhat obscured by standing with her back to the light, on making her first appearance: and with this remark she has invited her friends to imagine the interview, and pity her as they pictured her sitting down at the pianoforte, in the presence of the General and Sir George Smart, the organist at the Chapel Royal, to make her trial performance. The following extract from a letter written a short time afterwards to her brother, in a very happy mood, presents the counterpart:—

*“April 23, 1827.*

“DEAR EDWARD,—I have at length the pleasure of being able to send you my address, and also to inform you that I am very comfortable. Indeed, it would be strange if I were not so: I enjoy very great religious privileges, my comfort is studied in every particular, and my pupils are very affectionate. General O—— is a most lively Christian, and takes every opportunity of promoting religious conversation. His morning and evening expositions of Scripture are delightful, and so are his prayers. He considers my comfort in every trifle, and, whilst he preserves the proper dignity of his station, is so affable that I feel quite at liberty. My pupils have surprisingly won upon my affections: they are so very amiable, and I have every reason to believe our love is mutual. General O—— just now came in to tell me that I was perfectly at liberty to spend any evening or

Saturday afternoon with my friends. 'I do not say this,' he said, 'because I want to get rid of you, but only because it is an opportunity you will not have in the country.' This is very kind."

This letter shews that she quickly got over the trial of being the new, the stranger governess, that her divine Father had provided richly for her comfort and welfare, and that the lines had fallen unto her in pleasant places. The General was at the time a widower; but, not long after she had entered upon the duties of this charge, he married a widow lady, the Lady ——, whose two daughters-in-law, in addition to the General's daughters, were intrusted to Miss Bennett for instruction. This field of labour was entered upon with much solicitude, and the responsibility was felt to be greater when the number of her pupils was thus increased; but circumstances proved so congenial that, however much her soul had prospered elsewhere, here her principles were the most fostered to the full development of her Christian character. Her religious privileges were as various as they were precious; and, with this abundance of advantages, "more grace" was given to profit withal. The desire to educate the young ladies of her charge upon principles of deep-toned piety was entirely approved, and received every encouragement. The sanctuary had rich provision of the Word to make her joyful in the house of prayer. Introductions to the excellent of the earth were numerous. Friendships were formed, which the love of Christ cemented, never to be dissolved, though by death they are severed for a season. A lively interest was always manifested in the works of

charity and errands of mercy, which were so frequently her recreation. Altogether it was "a very fruitful hill" in which this tree of the Lord's planting was now placed; and, whatever promise there might before have been, it was while in the enjoyment of these advantages that the Holy Spirit seemed to be so plentifully poured upon her from on high, and the beams of the Sun of Righteousness had such a powerful influence, that her daily life and conversation abounded with fruit to God's praise and glory. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that she looked back upon this portion of her life, not only with feelings of intense gratitude to God, as "the Author and Giver of all good things," but also with deeply grateful remembrance of the valuable influence of the Lady — as an instrument of His goodness. Her deep impressions of the blessedness of that period never allowed her to think of her Ladyship but with the happiest recollections of spiritual obligation, and the warmest feelings of affection. She frequently remarked that though "not many mighty, not many noble are called," when religion springs up and makes its way through the difficulties of high station, it often displays a greater depth of principle, and a holier and more lovely aspect, than in cases where fewer obstacles have stood in the way of its growth.

It is evident that Miss Bennett was now exercising a most important influence for good upon her young pupils. She not merely taught the principles by which she would have them actuated, but, through the grace given unto her, sought to exhibit their power in her own conduct. Her consistency and devotedness proved that with her religion was a reality; her spirituality of mind shewed how intimate

was her communion with Jesus; and the fruits of the Spirit appeared in such loveliness in her general life and deportment, as to render godliness attractive, and endear her to every member of the family. The following extracts from letters written by two of her pupils on receiving intelligence of her death, shew the influence of her example and the reception her efforts met with.

Mrs M. writes:—"I hope never to forget what I owe her, both as to precept and practice. Nor shall I forget her kind care of me during illness in past years. Her unfailing regularity in reading the Bible and in prayer, getting up early in order to do so quietly in our cold bedroom during that very cold winter at St Servan in 1829 and 1830 has left a lasting impression on my mind."

Mrs F. remarks as follows:—"The memory of the just is blessed.' What a blessed change for her! We can only mourn for ourselves; and I do, and shall feel her loss very greatly, more than I can tell you, for I truly and sincerely loved her. She was such a true, whole-hearted, and consistent Christian."

There were peculiar circumstances which strengthened the attachment between her Ladyship and her Christian governess. They were called to pass together through deep waters of affliction; and then, more especially, did they realise the unspeakable comfort of being both one in Christ, and become more closely "knit together in love." Both, through grace, had yielded themselves to Him who has said to His people, "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow

thee ;” and now each, as occasion called for it, sought to confirm the other in her confidence in the Faithful Promiser, and to minister the rich consolation afforded by their union with Christ. An extract from one of her Ladyship’s letters, referring to these circumstances, will be read with interest. We give it at length, because it also contains an allusion to Miss Bennett’s personal appearance at an earlier age than when she was known by her numerous friends and pupils at Melton :—“ I well remember her the first evening she spent with me at ——, (in July 1827.) All through that summer we drank tea on the lawn, with a lovely view of the bay. Dear Miss Bennett looked so nice, in a white gown and spencer, &c. She was a very *good-looking* as well as pleasing young person at that time. I think I see her now. We had a great deal of conversation, whilst the young ones played and amused themselves. I was very much taken with her then ; but what drew us so particularly together was her being with me in the providence of God, from unexpected circumstances, during the first hours after the death of my darling child. She watched by me during the first night ; when, exhausted by all I had gone through, I fell asleep. When the agony of first awaking to my bereavement was so intense, she opened the Bible and read to me passage after passage, till she soothed me. It is remarkable that *I* was with her in *her* most unexpected bereavement—the greatest affliction she sustained through life,—the sudden intelligence of the death of her dear mother. Her agony was great. I read to her out of the same Bible which had soothed me two years previously. She most touchingly bore her great trial. The four

young pupils had lately learned that sweet hymn, 'Not lost, but gone before,' to the tune now sung to Keble's Evening Hymn. They used to sing it walking up and down the gardens on the evenings of that lovely summer. They were refraining from doing so, but she begged them to recommence it; the sweet words and music, she said, soothed her sorrow. Soon she was fully engaged in her work amongst the poor, and much blest there, as well as at all the other places wherever she was with us."

A valuable letter, written by Miss Bennett to her eldest sister upon the distressing loss sustained by them, to which allusion is made in the above extract, is evidence of the progress she had made in the divine life, shewing the resigned and earnest spirit in which she hearkened to the rod and who had appointed it, and how she realised the truth of the promise, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." The letter is remarkable also for the earnest desires expressed in reference to her sister's soul, and for the practical commentary it affords upon the apostolic exhortation to Christians, not to sorrow for those who have fallen asleep in Jesus as others who have no hope:—

"JERSEY, June 17, 1830.

"DEAR A——,—It is indeed a trial to lose so tender, so anxious, so good a parent, and to feel that she whom we so dearly love is taken from us. But here I would ask, Who took her? God, even our tender, compassionate God, who is too wise to err, too merciful to be unkind. *Then 'it is well.'* Infinite wisdom has done it, guided by infinite mercy; and dare we repine? Oh, no! far be the



thought! Let us bow in humble submission to our Father's will; let us bless His chastening hand. The chastisement is sent to us; the blessing is our beloved mother's. We weep, but it must be for ourselves. Yet, be it remembered, God chastens us in mercy. Come then, dear sister, and now that the first burst of grief is over, let us hear what the Lord would say to us by this bereavement. Surely this important exhortation meets us in a way never to be forgotten:—'Prepare to meet thy God.' Are we ready? What if the next summons comes to us? With hearts renewed by the Spirit of grace, and trusting solely to the merits of Jesus, that rock on which our beloved mother built, can we go forth with joy to meet the Bridegroom? It should tend to raise our thoughts from earth to heaven. Is the strong tie that bound us to earth broken? Then let us follow our dear parent in thought, in affection, to heaven. Do we earnestly desire to meet her again? Then we must walk in the narrow way. We must renounce the world. We must no longer hesitate between God and mammon. Her God must be ours: we must seek the same refuge: we must hide ourselves in the same Rock of Ages. Weary and heavy-laden she had sought the Lord; and she now finds, to her heart's content, that none ever trusted in Him and were confounded. By this message of mercy He invites us also to go to Him. And shall we refuse or delay?—refuse the rich mercies He has in store?—delay to taste His love? 'Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.' Could our dear mother now speak to us, what, think you, would she say? Might we not suppose she would address us in

words to this intent?—‘O my children, turn to the Lord that smiteth you. Seek His grace. Consider everything as light and trifling, as dust, compared with the salvation of your soul. Let nothing tempt you to sin. Seek for the help of God’s Holy Spirit. Cleave close to Jesus. Set heaven before you. Turn your back on the pleasures of the world; cast its cares upon your compassionate Lord. Take Him for your parent, your guide, your protector, your help in time of need.’ Oh! let us strive, dear A——, so to walk here, that, when life’s short course is over, the glorified spirit of our mother may welcome us to bliss, and lead us to the foot of the throne of the Lamb. I cannot tell you half the kindness I meet with from the dear family in which Divine Providence has placed me. Dear Lady E—— has been indeed a friend in this time of trouble, so tender, so sympathising. She wept with me, prayed with me, and read to me the precious Word of God. Oh! read that blessed book much, dear love, and may the Holy Spirit apply its consoling truths to your heart! Lady E—— consults my feelings, counsels me, comforts me. I love her and all the dear family more than ever. I did not receive the sad letter till Sunday, the 13th. We arrived at Jersey the day before. My heavenly Father has graciously supported me: He has fixed my mind on the happiness my darling mother now enjoys, and enables me to rejoice, not mourn, that she is now enjoying the blessings which are at His right hand. May you and I, in His own good time, be again united to her. May all of us be led by the same Spirit to the same Saviour; then shall we confess that these light afflictions, which are but for a



moment, have worked out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. It is late ; I must conclude. May God, even our own God, bless you, dear A——, prays your affectionate sister,

“ S. BENNETT.”

This letter affords us a just idea of the solemn earnestness with which she often pleaded with others, and the intensity of feeling with which she contemplated spiritual things.

Another letter, written to a former pupil a few years after she left General O——’s family, will shew the same desire to direct the thoughts to the things unseen ; and, in the counsel given to the young mother, we see that the one principle by which she was influenced in the discharge of her duties as a governess, was derived from above,—a desire to serve the Lord Christ. She writes :—

“ MELTON, *November 9, 1846.*

“ DEAR Mrs K——,—What a busy day this has been in town ! and how quiet with us ! I once remember going with my brother to see the Lord Mayor’s show, and I thought it a very childish exhibition, to say the best of it. I could really find no pleasure in pushing through the crowd in the dirty streets on a gloomy November day. How the glory of ‘ the New Jerusalem ’ eclipses all earth’s proudest pageants, and lays them in the dust, (Rev. xxi.) How very alarming Mr K——’s sudden illness must have been, and how comforting to you to see him gradually recovering his strength. I hope that long ere this he has been fully restored to his usual health. Thus our hea-

venly Father sometimes shakes what we most value, to teach us how frail a prop we may be leaning upon, and to remind us that that hope is alone founded on a rock which rests on Christ, who changes not, but is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' Not that we are forbidden to rejoice in the earthly comforts with which an indulgent Father has surrounded us; but we must let our feelings be moderated by the recollection, that they are not ours,—they are lent to us for a season, and may be recalled whenever the great Lord of all sees fit, (1 Cor. vii. 29–31.)

“I hope your dear little ones are all well, and going on to your heart's content. You are doubtless often to be found at a throne of grace in their behalf. The short prayer from the heart, when the hands may be busy, will, through our gracious Advocate, be heard, and bring an answer of peace, (Nehem. ii. 4,) as well as the pouring out of the soul, like Hannah of old, (1 Sam. i. 15,) in more favoured hours at leisure. It is a great work to train up souls for God, and much do we need that wisdom which is from above to enable us to do it aright. But here again we have a gracious promise (James i. 5) to encourage us; and also that one, the faithfulness of which I have often experienced, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; and my strength is made perfect in weakness.' The first great principle to be inculcated in the mind of a child is obedience. Rules should be few and simple, but always attended to; and your little ones should be taught cheerful and prompt compliance with their parents' wishes. The least disposition to the contrary should be carefully checked; a habit of implicit obedience, when once ac-

quired, will be found a most useful auxiliary to further education. Another thing of great importance in education is, that *the child should be taught by precept and example that religion is the chief thing*; and all connected with that should take the lead, and be preferred to anything else. I am no friend to emulation; it engenders envy and strife. The only emulation I would set before a child is the desire of pleasing those dear to her; this calls right feelings into exercise. How is dear C—— now? I hope cheerfully grateful to find herself useful. In the choice of a governess for one's children, the chief thing is to get one really interested in the welfare of the dear ones; and who so likely to be interested as a sister? . . . .  
—Your affectionate friend,

“S. BENNETT.”

We have already mentioned, among the privileges she enjoyed during her residence in General O——'s family, the society of many Christian friends. With one of these a frequent and life-long correspondence was kept up, much to the refreshment of Miss Bennett's soul. This friend's letters were so highly estimated, that she frequently spoke of them as demanding publication; they were, she would say, too great a treasure to be confined to herself. As they exhibit the character of the friendship and the tone of correspondence in which the subject of this memoir had pleasure, and thus reflect the spirituality of her own mind, we shall not be considered forgetful of the object of this little work, if we partially fulfil her oft-expressed wish, and insert some of them. They may again speak for the Master of whom the two friends delighted to write, and thus produce

“joy in heaven,” in which the sainted correspondents shall participate. If the same spirit of prayer as attended the writer and the first reader of them, attend the perusal, we doubt not they will afford delight and convey a blessing.

The first letter we introduce contains some interesting remarks on Gethsemane, and believing expectations of the comfort and benefit to be derived from “the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ :”—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have thought much of you during the past week, and with melancholy sweetness have considered you as having fellowship with Christ in His sufferings. Largely as we have contributed by our sins to that heavy load borne by the dying Saviour, shall we not mourn, shall we not repent ?

“Yes, our souls are happy thus chastened, thus corrected. Gethsemane hath a sanctified atmosphere. Does it take its Hebrew name from the olive-press ?\* What pressure was Christ to endure in this very garden !—‘began to be sorrowful ;’—the original language says, dissolved in sorrow, such as may separate soul and body, excruciating pain of soul and anguish of spirit,—such intense mental suffering as to force blood from His veins ere He shed it on the cross. Said I not it was for us a healthy spot ? Where will faith and love grow, if not here ? where meek resignation bow her head, (while her idols lie prostrate,) if not here ?

\* According to Cassellus and Lightfoot, it is compounded of two Hebrew words denoting a place of *oil-presses*. The fact that Gethsemane was near the Mount of Olives (Luke xxii. 39) confirms this derivation.—*Parkhurst*.

“ We are more highly privileged than the first disciples ; three only witnessed His agony ; the women saw Him die, but they were not in Gethsemane.

“ I think you were at S—— last Easter-Sunday. I go to-morrow to lay before the risen Saviour my broken vows and callous heart, to covenant afresh for a rich stream of mercy to be poured over past and future, to exchange chaos and confusion and wild uproar for heavenly peace and rest. Will you join with me ? Shall we not sit at the feast until we can say, We are ‘ sick of love ? ’ May we daily realise this interesting subject, and watch for His Second Coming.

“ Accept the love of her who longs for your soul’s health.  
—Affectionately yours, E. R——.”

In the following letter we see that Miss Bennett sometimes consulted this friend upon points relating to the spiritual welfare of her pupils. That they both were greatly influenced by thoughts of their future home, and of the glory for which they might be training inheritors, appears in the rapturous meditation with which Mrs R. seeks to cheer and refresh the soul of her loved correspondent :—

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . Nothing has been more blessed to the souls of young persons than the communion of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus ; therefore I should take all who can receive with due reverence, whether the marks of conversion are apparent or not. I do not think the Saviour would exclude those who are willing. Young confirmed persons have not as yet entered on the magic land of pleasure, they may find this Holy Sacrament afterwards to be a grand preservative.

“Why should you wish any instructor for them except yourselves? The citadel of the heart will be more open to attacks made by you than by any minister. Go forth and weep, if you will; but the precious seed you bear and sow will take root the more effectually, as you depend not on human aid. The beautiful exotic of grace is often frozen in the youthful heart by needless austerity in mature Christians: they do not always distinguish between sinful liberty and the natural exuberance of youthful spirits. Your pupils are happy: this shews you preserve the medium. God, the shedder of blessings, bless both teachers and learners. . . . .

“How sweet will be the rest of heaven when we are permitted to enjoy that beatific vision! how wonderful the change! If now the smile of our heavenly Father makes up for the loss of every earthly good, what must be the delight of the soul to dwell for ever with the Lord?—free from deadness in prayer, unbelieving fears, wanderings of soul in meditation, want of fervour in the cause of Christ, making a world of our own in which we delight to remain (while those around us perhaps think we are swallowed up by the love of Christ, and desire for His glory),—these soul-distressing evils all passed away, and to return no more! The mysterious incarnation full of wonders,—the still more awful agony and death of Jesus,—the love of God the Father in appointing this tremendous sacrifice,—all, all opened to our adoring view! By types and shadows God appears to have delighted in revealing the Saviour to lost man more and more clearly as the time for His appearance drew nigh, until at length He bursts upon our view as the Life and Light of men; and this is



the Christ our eyes when closed to earth shall behold,—no longer the ‘despised and rejected,’—no longer bleeding from cruel usage. Methinks the apostle judged wisely in not being moved by suffering from the glorious contemplation: he had tasted the power of the unseen world, and knew well what God had laid up for those who love Him. There, my dear friend, you and I shall no longer be the toil-worn mariners, like Peter, fearing the winds and waves which surround us, but clad in the Saviour’s beauty, the loving and lovely children of God. Pray for me earnestly, that God may finish His work and take me to Himself in His own good time.—Ever Yours,  
 “E. R——.”

Another letter from this friend contains some valuable remarks upon the maintenance of the inner life, and the production of spiritual growth:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Yours of the 28th I duly received. I was beginning to expect some intelligence of you with anxiety. You are highly favoured with temporal mercies; may the Lord give you grace to devote your all to His service with simple integrity of heart. You are now present to my mental vision as I saw you years long past in S—— church with the lambs of Christ’s flock, waiting yourself to feed on His body and His blood; myself risen, as it were, from the dead, and desiring once again to join in the communion of saints: we found the remembrance of Him precious then; let us expect a sweet visit on the coming Festival.\* Our Master likes us to ‘hunger and thirst’ after the refreshment He bountifully gives to

\* Easter.

the seeking soul. My beloved pastor (gone where no season of mourning is kept) used to call our attention particularly to self-examination at this season. The Lord Jesus seems to have dwelt much on His future sufferings in His conversation with the disciples, and much good arises to the soul from every review of its declensions from the right path; and the Christian, either layman or minister, is most safe in prosperity, amid the applause of men, and in adversity amid their scorn, while he talks with his own heart. Their praise he knows due only to the exterior; their scorn he feels deserved; and he feels too that they cannot form a lower estimate of his value than his Bible has taught him to form of himself. There is a remarkable coincidence between David's saying, 'Create in me a clean heart,' and the saying of Christ, 'Ye must be born again.' The new-born babe is perfect in all its parts, prepared for the future man; but it is wanting in growth and understanding: so the Christian must go on to perfection, and can only grow in knowledge as he is shone upon and watered by the Holy Spirit. Some Christians are always children, as they neglect the appointed diet and shiver in the cold, not having their minds exercised with faith, and love, and hope. Others understand themselves and are fully acquainted with the deviation of their hearts from God; but they do not look sufficiently to the comforting, cheering influence of the Spirit. Both these should be peculiarly dear to the Church and her pastors. The children of grace should have their opening buds of faith and love drawn within her warm precincts; those who see a wilderness of thorns and thistles within themselves should be encouraged to



believe that their spot is the spot of His children,—that such is the natural state of man declared from the first to the last of the Bible. To those who feel their state, is every comforting promise made; and not to trust in their own hearts augurs the absence of folly and the presence of wisdom which can only come from above. How beautifully consistent would many believers be, if they ‘communed with their own hearts in their chamber, and were still.’

“I hope you will not forget me on Easter-day; but think of me when you are an honoured guest at the Lord’s table. With the outward signs in His house I must dispense; but I trust with holy boldness to take the inward grace. I will importune for my share of the crumbs. If He flee me, I will follow, and rest not,

‘Until the voice of my Beloved sound  
O’er rocks, and hills, and rising ground.’

“And now, my dear friend, I must conclude, trusting we shall in spirit visit the grave of Jesus, have fellowship with His sufferings, and become buried with Him from all the vanities which surround us and are too busy within, looking by faith for His glorious return, when sickness, poverty, and disgrace will no longer haunt the Saviour’s beloved ones; but riches and honour, might, majesty, and dominion, shall be to the Lamb and His purchased people for ever and ever. Oh! my beloved friend, let us up and on our way, rejoicing in the glorious prospect before us. *Vale! Vale!*—Ever yours,

“E. R——.”

The reflections contained in the following, upon the

removal of a valued minister, may prove a word in season to some who are experiencing a similar trial:—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I do not know a greater trial to a truly Christian mind than you are at present enduring—to be deprived of the nurture and admonition of our dear brother L——, with so many young lambs dependent on you for food. I dearly love mother Church; but, oh! if her enemies ever triumph over her, it will be because she has so long suffered ‘dumb dogs’ to take precedence of her faithful children. Poverty, pain, and death of friends, are light trials while we can go into the house of God, and find support and consolation from His preached word. Yet, as you have not chosen your own path, but are exactly where Providence has placed you, I do hope your soul will still be a well-watered garden, and that your Beloved will constantly visit it and eat and drink with you. ‘Fear not,’ said the angel to the Christ-seeking women; ‘He is not here.’ Yet He is performing a part for your salvation. If a friend’s experience may be quoted, I must declare I knew not the value of the Bible until driven into seclusion to study, without external help, that holy book. Every day some refreshing, soul-comforting text strikes me, often as it never appeared before. I see a neglected precept, a command to which I have yielded no obedience, and am convicted of awful rebellion and inexcusable perverseness; I fly, a felon, to the cross, and sweet mercy is still sweeter. . . . I want only three years of threescore; therefore I must not expect restoration to health. But I may be permitted (although most unworthy) the favour soon to expect my

Lord ; the reward of His sufferings I shall enjoy for ever, and forget pain and sorrow. We shall not need a preached gospel then, but ‘know as we are known.’ A cavilling spirit is the spirit of the present day ; therefore, perhaps, it would be wise to leave the young to make discoveries for themselves of the disagreement between the sermon and the liturgy,—to lead them to consider that and the Bible as the fountain of instruction, and the worship of God the most essential matter in going to church. I have greatly rejoiced over you under dear Mr L——’s ministry, as assisting and comforting you in your arduous path of duty, and deeply mourn for you and others its removal. But, oh! my friend, our beloved Master is even now at the door ; see you not the harbingers of His approach?—  
 Ever yours, E. R——.”

The candour with which Miss Bennett wrote to Mrs R. about her own spiritual condition, and the faithfulness with which they dealt with each other, is manifest from the following extract :—

“I think it is high time to inquire about your precious self. I trust the selfishness of grief will never make me unmindful of the mercy I receive in your life being spared to me yet. That the gospel is within your reach is one source of great comfort to me. May your soul be as a green olive-tree planted in the house of the Lord! Your outward prosperity is nicely balanced by the anxious responsibility of your situation, and the great labour and care attending it. You feel you want souls for your hire, and the prospect of gain does not injure you. You often carry to God a weary mind and weary body, and then you feel

that all your strength is in Christ. You cannot pray with vigour, you cannot read with zest; then Jesus says, 'All thy fresh springs are in me.' Now, this experience humbles you—teaches you to lie at the foot of the cross; here you see you are a miracle of grace.

"Thank you for the sweet little book—very original, and precious to me, as just expressive of my own feelings about death. Like dear Mr Simeon, I should like to die alone, except with Christ. Farewell; peace be with you!

"E. R——."

We learn from the next extract one of the methods by which Miss Bennett sought to gladden the heart of her believing friend:—

". . . . I much enjoy your little reports of those who have departed under your own eye; to me they are very comforting, as I live but from day to day. May we, dear friend, climb daily to the top of Pisgah, praying the Lord to shew us the promised land, and to give us all those holy affections and desires which may make heaven to us more a change of place than a change of state. Our coldness and deadness is all forgiven, daily and abundantly, for the sake of Him whose compassionate apology for sleepy disciples was the weakness of their flesh. To the quickening grace of the Holy Spirit I commend you, dear friend, and the precious lambs committed to your charge.—Ever your attached friend,

E. R——."

The following letter contains not only valuable remarks, but also Mrs R——'s testimony to Miss Bennett's diligent

improvement of time, which in so marked a manner characterised her whole life :—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I little thought once, when I travelled near two miles up and down a high hill, in frost, snow, rain, and wind, in my cloak and pattens, to church, that I should ever be shut up for so many years without those blessed means of grace. Duty bade me go, and duty bids me stay. I feel the same refreshing strength from the study of the Word as I then felt from the sermons ; but could I look back on idle Sabbaths, the cup would be very bitter. Your busy time is drawing to a close, and a short respite will do body and soul good ; but, judging of your manner of employing leisure when you were here, I think you do not rest enough to strengthen for future exertions. I often fear you will be like the excellent Legh Richmond, working well, but not long. I should like to see a few more such ‘slothful’ ones in the Church of Christ. But if you work too hard, you will die too soon, and the world will lose the benefit of your prayers and example.

“How sweet it is to remember that the Lord Jesus said He would be with His people ‘always ;’ for much do they need reviving love to cheer their cold hearts, and a sweet sense of His support in this weary world, where they dare not lay down their armour until they put on their crown. Watch and always pray, is the daily language of the Spirit to our hearts : no cessation, no rest ; when we sleep on our path, Christ wakens us to prayer by some providence, some alarm, and we go quickly to our Fortress to shelter and hide. True, He pleads our

weakness ; but He will drive us to safety. We hear the lion roaring who would soon devour us. Weak and foolish as we are, frighten he may ; but Christ guards the tenderest lambs, and watches the feeblest footsteps of the loaded mother ready to sink with the fatigue of her young ones : she hears His tuneful voice, and struggles on assured. Christ Jesus bless and support you ! Amen.—Ever yours, in the best of bonds, E. R——.”

At the conclusion of a letter on ordinary topics she remarks :—

“ . . . But to hold our accustomed intercourse on the love of God in Christ. Sweetly soothing subject ! how quickly does it warm the heart chilled by adversity ; how does it prop the tottering footsteps ! In the full blaze of this love we shall live for ever ; yes, for ever. Did you think of this love when, with your dispirited and jaded body, you were closing your arduous labours ? Did you contemplate that some of the ‘ little ones ’ may have received the first elementary feeling of that love, which, when once become a part, however small, of the soul, can never die ? Ought you to sink in the waves, while the sheltering rock has a cleft to hide you ? But dying love pitied and sympathised with your sorrows and your weakness. Farewell, dearest friend. I am obliged to pray for you ; I hope you are for me. My light is going. Good night ! E. R——.”

We have one more extract from this spiritual correspondence, which we cannot omit :—



“MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is indeed good to be under the wise discipline of our heavenly Father; His Word admonishes that every thought and wish of your heart should be brought into sweet subjection to His will. I think, as believers go on in the divine life, they find their experience just like David’s,—a daily deeper sense of indwelling sin. They want more of the new heart, they want a constant spirit emptied of self; they gladly fly to the covenant mercies purchased for them by their Lord, that themselves and services may be buried in the multitude of His tender mercies,—that they may be lost in the vast ocean of His loving-kindness, according to which they seek pardon for internal as well as external unworthiness. I esteem it a mark of Christ’s love to your soul that you are enabled to commune thus with your own heart in its secret chamber, and there learn a lowly and just estimate of yourself in the sight of God. This is true humility; this is the broken spirit which Christ healeth; no other state of mind is safe or healthy; no other will receive a whole Christ and a triune God. The beauty of a Christian’s life is usefulness; but there is danger of self-complacency, of forgetting that all we do is valueless, unless it be the fruit of love to Him.

“If we look within, we wonder we are not warned to depart as worthless. Oh, that my poor cold heart were more in heaven, whence all that is good for me will descend in showers! I am looking for a time of fiery trial before the advent of our Lord. The saints must be made white. Already the storm mutters in the distance. Many of the elect and the dear children have been gathered during this pestilential winter. Those fearful

signs our Lord spoke of seem coming to pass, nor do we know what a day may bring forth.

“Our watchword is, ‘To prayer.’ Let the cry, ‘Thy kingdom come,’ resound from every tongue. Sweet are the promises of care and protection to the Lord’s people. Who will obtain the crown of martyrdom, we know not; some appear even now ready to put it on. I pray often for pardon, and peace, and rich foretaste of heaven to be showered on you, and that your very house may prove a Bethel to every one therein.—Ever your affectionate

“E. R——.”

We have been induced to insert so many passages from these letters, not merely because of their intrinsic excellence, but also because we know that the subject of this memoir was oft refreshed and strengthened by them; and, therefore, that we may look upon them as a part of the instrumentality by which her Divine Father carried her “from strength to strength.” Overflowing as they do with love of Christ, evidencing such a continual realisation of His presence, and referring so joyfully to the glory which shall be revealed as their certain portion, we are not surprised that to Miss Bennett they were precious. The spirituality of the mind that could so value them must appear to every reader. And must not many feel convinced of sad coldness of heart, and lack of sincere enjoyment of divine things, when they compare them with their own letters to friends, in which Christ and the hope of glory so seldom form a theme?

The imperfect sketch we have given of Miss Bennett’s character and work, while engaged in the several situa-



tions referred to, will, we think, have left the impression upon the minds of our readers that those were privileged children who were committed to her care ; and that the parents who secured her services must have enjoyed great comfort in the assurance that their governess was not a mere hireling,—content with attention to the stipulated round of duties, but undoubtedly, in the highest acceptance of the expression, a “Christian governess,” who lovingly served the Lord Christ, and who, therefore, besides instructing her pupils in the different branches of a liberal and accomplished education, watched for their *souls* as one who must give account. And this her labour of love was not in vain in the Lord : the good seed she sowed so carefully and prayerfully took root and sprang up, bearing fruit, we may add, “a hundred-fold.” And it is to be observed, her work remained ; for she lived to write of the grace that was manifested in some of the children of one of her pupils. Oh, who can limit the effects of being useful to *one* soul ? “The circle that rises round the sinking stone, grows wider and wider, and embraces a larger and larger sphere, till it dies in gentle wavelets on the distant beach.” And the successful effort to be useful to one soul is, as it were, casting a stone into the sea of time, which may produce circle upon circle of believing generations, enlarging and enlarging even until they break upon the shore of eternity. How it ought to stir us up to increased earnestness in endeavouring to lead those around us to Jesus, to know that if they really find Him themselves, *they* will seek to introduce their children, friends, or neighbours to the bliss of having such a friend. The very nature of true religion

secures a continual repetition of the conduct of Andrew, who, when he had himself found the Saviour, brought his brother Simon unto Jesus.\* Thus is it in the case before us. The results of Miss Bennett's spiritual labours may be seen in many a young family, which earnest and prayerful mothers are training up as a seed to serve the Lord. As may be imagined, her former pupils' children were often remembered in her prayers, and also were counselled and pleaded with by valuable and persuasive letters, written in the fulness of her love of Christ, and in deep anxiety to see them followers of that which is good. One of these letters, to a child to whom she was god-mother, may perhaps be acceptable to the reader, not only on account of the advice it contains, but also as an illustration of the affectionate manner in which she sought to do her work for Christ:—

“DEAR J——,—I am beginning this letter a week before the time, lest when your birthday does come I may not be able then to write to you. I do indeed wish my little godson many happy returns of his birthday, and hope that every anniversary may find him improving in all true wisdom—(see Job xxviii. 28)—and in all useful knowledge, a comfort to his kind parents and affectionate brothers and sisters, and then I think he will feel exceedingly happy. I am very glad to hear of your brother's success: it is a good thing to have an example in one so near and dear to you, and to whom, as an elder brother, you may naturally look up. I hope you will be pleased with the book I send you. *The Book*, of which it is the

\* John i. 40-42.

history, is the only sure and safe guide given you to direct your steps in life. Taking the Bible as your friend and counsellor, and following its counsels, you will walk safely through all the dangers and difficulties you may meet with in your journey. (Look at Psalm cxix. 9.)

“This is an important birthday to you, as it begins the year in which you are to become a school-boy, and, as I wish to give you a little good advice on this subject, I shall borrow from a letter written to a boy about your age on his first going to school. Indeed, upon looking over it, I think I must copy the greater part of it for you, and so now I shall end mine :—

“MY DEAR ——,—I have heard that you are going to school, and I wish you joy with all my heart on an event which shews that your dear parents are able to treat you with so much confidence. I remember, as if it were yesterday, the time when I first went to school. School is a very happy place, if a boy goes the right way to work. You must feel now as if God were going to try how much you can love and trust Him, and how much you can love your dear parents ; for now is the time when you are to shew what your real character and principles are. I consider going to school one of the most important things in the world, and a great deal of your happiness all your life will depend upon how you set out at your first school. Let me, therefore, first advise you before you go to pray to God about it. Put yourself under His care, ask Him to watch over you, and pray that you may always be a brave, honest, and religious boy. Of course, among so many boys, you will find some of all sorts,—some, perhaps, who love God and some who do not. Take a firm stand

at once, and let all the boys see that you serve God. You recollect Solomon's wise choice,—now is the time for you to make *your* choice. Be very slow in making a friend of any boy; wait a little and observe them all, and see who appear to love God, and then choose your friends. I have known many boys who got into difficulties by choosing their friends too soon. In the meantime, you must be kind to all the boys, and let them always see that you are not selfish, but that you wish to make everybody happy. You will often have to say *no*; but everybody who wishes to be respectable and good and great must be able to say *no*. Never, never do a thing, however little a thing it is, which you feel to be wrong; the whisper of your conscience is the voice of God. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Let all the boys see that you can be as firm as you are kind; they will love you the better for being firm if you are kind. Let your master and all the boys have cause to say that you are one on whose word everybody may depend. If you get into a scrape, confess it. If you are charged with a fault, do not make excuses. Never tell, never look, never do a lie. Be very honest in all your games, and if you see a liar, have as little to say to him as you possibly can. Try to keep a good temper with all the boys, and be very kind to the little ones. Be very manly,—that is, be a bold courageous boy; speak out, and do not be afraid of saying or doing anything you know to be right. God will help you, and He will be pleased if He sees you think more of Him than of what the boys will say. And never forget that your character as a man will very much depend on what you are now. Everything you learn and say and do is a seed of which

all your life is to be the harvest ; therefore, begin now to be a real Christian. Love Christ ; put your trust in Him ; and He will be such a friend to you as no words of mine can express. I have observed that those are the happiest men all through life, and the most successful too, who begin to be religious when they are boys.’

“One word more, dear J—— : be ever open with your dear parents, consider them as your best friends, and never be afraid to go and tell them anything. Prayer, it has been well said, is ‘the key of the morning and the bolt of the night,’ so never forget to kneel down before you leave your room in the morning and before you go to bed at night. Without God’s blessing, how can you do well ? and without His gracious care, how can you be safe ? Read also, if only a few verses, out of God’s Word, and ask Him daily to give you His Holy Spirit to teach you how to pray and how to understand His Word, and feel its truths in your heart. . . .—I am, dear J——, your affectionate godmother,  
S. BENNETT.”

In concluding this chapter, we cannot fail to remark how much, under the Divine blessing, Miss Bennett owed to the influence of a godly mother, and to the piety of those with whom her lot was cast. To parents who are seeking to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and make them the subject of many prayers, the case is encouraging. The training was successful ; the prayers were answered ; and we may with all reverence say, she increased “in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”



## CHAPTER II.

### The School.

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“ Her eye was meek and gentle ; and a smile  
Play'd on her lips, as in her voice was heard  
Maternal kindness, dignity, and love :  
The occupation dearest to her heart  
Was to encourage goodness.”





## CHAPTER II.

### THE SCHOOL.

IN the previous chapter we have traced the leadings of Divine Providence, and noted the most important steps in the earlier portion of Miss Bennett's life. We have seen at what a tender age she was deprived of one of her principal earthly props, and how the Father of the fatherless raised up for her a friend who, from a sense of gratitude, adopted her for education. We have followed her through various spheres of usefulness, until she entered upon her last engagement as a private governess, in which circumstances were so peculiarly conducive to her spiritual growth, and to the formation of her eminently Christian character. The time had arrived for the commencement of her more public career, in which she was to be the honoured and happy guide of others into those green pastures of divine love wherein she had found such rich and satisfying refreshment.

For a long time her thoughts had been directed to Melton Mowbray, as the place where she would wish to conduct a school, should an opening be presented. Her

younger sister had been suitably educated for occupying a similar position in life to herself ; and the hope of their fond mother was, that the two would be able to undertake the management of a school there, where they had several friends who would feel a deep interest in their usefulness and success. This plan, however, was not to be exactly carried out. The younger sister married. But He who is the Great Disposer of events, and appoints the place of our habitation, so provided that she—now Mrs W———had her home at Melton, and thus was able to give very valuable assistance to Miss Bennett. This disarrangement of the long-cherished hopes would at first sight appear an obstacle to the success of our Christian governess ; but it proved rather the all-wise Father's amendment of His children's plan, providing more abundantly in His tender care for their comfort and welfare. Mrs W—— was in reality enabled by her position to render more essential service to her sister's interest ; while the mutual pleasure to be derived from each other's society was in no way diminished, but rather increased by the change of circumstances. How often, when events occur which appear to be opposed to the fulfilment of our own wishes and arrangements, are we ready to exclaim with a tried one of old, "All these things are against me !" yet do we afterwards find that our disappointments were most important elements in our success and well-being, and we marvel at our slowness to learn the oft-repeated lesson upon our shortsightedness and unbelief. Notwithstanding the frequent rebukes we receive in the real results, we are prone to allow impatience or despondency to possess us, when our prayers are not answered precisely at the time or in

the manner we desire. The explicit words of the Saviour "Ask, and it shall be given you," ought to be more precious to us than they are. There is in them a rich store of consolation, if we do but enjoy an unwavering assurance of their truth. And why should we doubt? There is nothing which God's dealings with His people more clearly establish than the comfortable fact, that He is the hearer and answerer of prayer. The time and the manner in which the promise is fulfilled vary according to the infinite wisdom of Him who knows what is best. In some instances while we are yet speaking He will answer, as in Daniel's case, (Dan. ix. 20, 21):—"Whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, *whiles I was speaking in prayer*, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." David also praises God for an immediate answer (Psalm cxxxviii. 3):—"In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." In other cases He may see the necessity for delay, but the prayers are not disregarded, and in *His* time the answer, richer in blessing perhaps than the supplicant either asked or expected, will descend. And yet in other instances we may not only be kept long waiting, but something apparently quite contrary to the petition comes as the answer, but still *the answer* from a Father who hearkens and decrees in true wisdom and love. Thus the Lord Jesus dealt with His beloved Paul, (2 Cor. xii. 7-9.) There was given to Paul a thorn in the flesh, a

messenger of Satan to buffet him. In bitterness of heart he cried, "Lord, let this depart from me." No answer came. Again he prayed the same words. No answer still. A third time he knelt, and now the answer came, not as he expected. The thorn is not plucked away,—the messenger of Satan is not driven back to hell; but Jesus opens wide His more loving breast, and says, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."\* And in like manner the child of God, in bringing his temporal wishes before the throne of grace, must ask in submission to the will and wisdom of Him who knows what will really bless. / He may often lead us through a long series of events and circumstances which appear to be against us, but which, though disguised to our observation, are gradually unfolding a most gracious answer to our prayer. / Thus the occurrence which suggested these remarks, Mrs W——'s marriage, which led to her residence in Melton, though apparently the thwarting of a long-cherished scheme, was under God the more direct cause of Miss Bennett settling there, and so God's way of fulfilling her heart's desire.

Just at the time when she was concluding her work in the last situation she held, the desired opening at Melton Mowbray occurred. A school which had been long established was about to be given up, and Mrs W—— obtained the first offer of it for her. Circumstances were inviting: a wider sphere of usefulness was presented; there was the prospect of a better opportunity of making provision for declining years; and the comfort of a home of her own, in a place where she had many relatives and friends. As,

\* M'Cheyne.

however, her hope of having the assistance of her sister in the management of such an establishment had failed, she had some hesitation about her present duty. One of less scrupulous feeling would have had no difficulty in coming to a decision ; but she felt that she must “ not make haste,” but “ wait on the Lord.” The offer was not accepted, therefore, until she had exercised much reflection with many prayers. She still wished, partly from an humble estimate of her own powers, to be associated in her work with some one of like mind, who would share the labour and responsibility, and with whom she might take counsel. This desire was gratified. A lady with whom she had had some previous acquaintance, and with whose sentiments she was well satisfied, was willing to join her in the undertaking. The arrangement tended greatly to her comfort, and she ever expressed her thankfulness, that in Miss Baldwin she found a supply for what she deemed her own deficiencies ; and often did she rejoice in the decision exhibited by her partner when their principles were put to the test.

Another circumstance occurred which relieved her from great anxiety, and removed another difficulty from her path. To be without the advantage of a clergyman in whose sentiments she could cordially concur, was regarded by her as a serious obstacle. For some time this had been the case at Melton ; but at this juncture, by the kindness of the vicar, the parishioners had been allowed to provide an evening lecturer, who, in her opinion, faithfully proclaimed the gospel of Christ, and whose preaching was with considerable power. His public ministrations being impressive, and the matter and manner of his addresses calculated to arrest attention and to edify, it

was felt that there would be no famine of hearing the Word to disappoint the necessities of the lambs, which Miss Bennett would be striving to lead into the fold of the good Shepherd. She viewed the ministry as a divinely appointed ordinance of the greatest importance and value; her soul had been so much fed and nourished thereby, and she felt that it was indispensable to the success of her spiritual efforts among her pupils, as well as to her own progress in the divine life. She looked upon her position in the Lord's vineyard as ancillary to the clergyman, and, as will hereafter appear, she always sought the assistance and advice of her faithful and earnest pastors. She had asked for heavenly wisdom to direct her paths; and this ministerial appointment was taken to be one, amongst many indications, granted for her guidance. Temporal advantages were allowed but little weight; to do the will of God, and to follow the divine leadings in the work of saving souls, formed the absorbing considerations. In this spirit she prayed and reflected much, and, with the conviction that her call was clear, the step was taken. She commenced her labours in the summer of 1837; and the extensive blessing which has followed, affords abundant evidence of the divine approval, and shews that God was with her of a truth. Upon her arrival at Melton it was necessary to let it be clearly understood on what principles she intended her establishment to be conducted, and on which alone she would be willing to undertake the guardianship of pupils. Her entrance upon this new field of labour was marked by decision, which, though it had its conflicts, had its triumphs afterwards. Considerable difficulty is often experienced by persons professing godliness



in drawing the line between what is consistent and what is not so in habits and amusements. It was her desire not to be unnecessarily opposed to diversions of any kind, being assured that true religion was a service of "perfect freedom," in itself as foreign from ascetic gloom as from seductive worldliness. The difference of opinion which exists even among earnest Christians with regard to a few recreations, subjects those who take the stricter view to the imputation of being "righteous overmuch," and severely tests their conscientious firmness. There is a decoying influence, not easily resisted, when those whom we regard as better and more advanced in divine truth than ourselves, encourage by their example a participation in recreations, which we are convinced are not innocent but injurious. Of course, there need not be any hesitation in our minds respecting our *duty*, as long as we have such convictions; nay, further than this, we may plainly infer from the apostle's remark to the Romans, (xiv. 23,) "He that doubteth is damned if he eat," that if we even have a doubt about the rectitude or expediency of any pursuit or amusement, our indulgence in it is sin. Miss Bennett's mind was firmly made up to discountenance *dancing*, feeling strongly that in parties assembled for such an amusement the mind is unfitted for holy communion with God,—that, in many instances, the natural desires of a heart ever prone to go astray are stirred up and strengthened, the Holy Spirit is grieved and provoked to withdraw His sacred influences,—and, in short, that the amusement, with its usual accompanying circumstances and arrangements, has a powerful tendency to separate between God and the soul. Such convictions upon this subject furnished an



opportunity of making clearly understood the system on which she determined to conduct the school. It was painful to her to differ from some of her friends on this point, but having such a decided view of the evils arising from this entertainment, and having most carefully and prayerfully considered it, she did not hesitate to place conspicuously in her printed circulars, "No dancing taught." We may mention by the way, that although she was averse to obtruding herself upon the public as an authoress, she viewed this subject as one of such serious importance that she was induced to publish her sentiments on dancing in a short pamphlet entitled "Worldly Amusements."\* This little publication, and another against our great national evil, drunkenness, which was headed, "The Snare: its Danger,"† are the only results of her pen which have been put into print. This will be the more regretted, if we notice the merits of these productions. "Worldly Amusements" is so concise, appeals so forcibly to those who have any desire that their souls should prosper and be in health, and puts the question so plainly upon the right ground, whether such an occupation *can* be a part of that continual service, of which our daily duties and recreations, as well as our devotions, constitute a portion, that we think persons must confess her arguments unanswerable, and admit that at all events to adopt and act upon her views is to escape innumerable temptations. After shewing the wholesome dread which ought to be entertained of the possible dangers, and exhorting her readers to avoid them, she well concludes one line of argument by saying, "Then let the anxious inquiry for

\* Vide Appendix A.

† Vide Appendix B.

the future be, not how near I can draw to the world and not be of it; but rather, how far can I, as a follower of Christ, keep from the world, and fulfil my duty in it? 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.'" It can readily be understood that there were some, who urged that the insertion in the circulars of the notice we have referred to would be the ruin of her prospects, and render it impossible for the school to answer. But Miss Bennett was too surely confirmed in her principles to be moved by any such consideration to make a compromise with the world. She could comfortably confide in Him who is the only source of prosperity; and, even should He in His wisdom see fit to withhold success, she could still "rejoice in the Lord" and in the testimony of a "good conscience." There is no doubt that a sacrifice was made by this faithfulness to her convictions, and pupils were lost; but it also had the contrary effect, and one of her best supporters became such through reading so unmistakably in this notice the character of the school. In the same spirit it was made an unexceptionable rule not to go into, or receive company, on the Lord's day. And that the service at church on Wednesday evenings might be attended with regularity, no invitations to visit on those evenings were accepted. Many regulations of a kindred character, which it is unnecessary to specify, were adopted in obedience to, and with the blessing of, what is written, "Him that honoureth me I will honour;" "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." It was thus made known, that the interests of the soul were to have a paramount consideration in the management of the school, and that decided Christian

principles were to be the foundation, whatever difficulty in the way of success they might produce.

An extract from a letter, written to a lady whose daughter had been sent as a pupil, will confirm this, and convey an idea of the deep sense of responsibility with which Miss Bennett undertook the care of the young persons committed to her charge:—

“We wish that the young ones committed to our care should enjoy as much as possible the advantages of home and school united. We desire to cultivate their understandings, and, above all, to keep them, as far as in us lies, ‘unspotted from the world.’ It is my earnest desire that ‘a nursery for God’ may in truth be as an inscription on our house, and that, obtaining wisdom from above to direct us in our arduous work, we may have grace to train up these children in the way they should go. Miss — always appears attentive to religious instruction; may it take deep root in her heart! We sow in faith, expecting to reap in joy. The promise is faithful and true, ‘When he is old, he shall not depart from it;’ so, if our expectations are disappointed, the failure *must* rest in the training. What need, then, of the Divine guidance! Next to the Christian ministry, the office of instructor of youth is the most important. Who can trace the evils that may arise from neglecting, or the blessings that may follow from attending to, this important duty? I feel assured, dear Mrs —, that when you pray for your child, you sometimes remember those to whom you have intrusted her.”

In proceeding to relate the incidents of her school-life, it is desirable to give the portrait of our “Christian

Governess" in some of those features which characterised her manner and bearing towards her pupils. One of her leading convictions was the necessity of avoiding severity. The careful observation upon which she grounded her rules of action in the treatment of the young shewed her, that stern and harsh government engendered deceit, and that, although it might produce apparent obedience, it was altogether hostile to the formation of true character. Therefore, one of the first rules in her system was, that *love*, and not fear, must be the controlling power. As love would produce a reciprocation of affection, in like manner she insisted that *sincerity* must be manifest in every dealing in order to gain confidence in return. Children, she saw, were quick in their perception of many traits in the character of those set over them, and greatly influenced by a uniform display of straightforward proceeding, and carefulness not to disappoint their just expectations. *Firmness* well harmonises with sincerity; and it was placed among the essential qualifications for the maintenance of due authority. By authority, be it observed, is not intended a power over the mind which creates a craven spirit, or destroys self-respect, and enslaves, but that necessary influence which constrains only to proper obedience. /

In the manner of maintaining discipline in schools there has happily been a revolution, somewhat similar to that in the practice of medicine. In the latter, we know that, at one time, bleeding was regularly resorted to as the sovereign remedy, and the pole and lancet were the sign of the practitioner; but such barbarism has been put to flight by science. So in the system of school manage-

ment, the rod and harsh measures were intimately associated with the name of school, and the very profession of schoolmaster or schoolmistress at once attached to those who followed it the character of a Busby; but such barbarism has also been banished by a more attentive study of the temperament of children, and the trial of the superior method of appealing to, and calling into exercise, their better feelings. And there can be no doubt that, in carrying out this more excellent way, the human countenance, when the index of an amiable disposition and inflexible principle, can exercise over many an irresistible influence. We readily call to mind the effect of a look from the Saviour upon Peter. Notwithstanding the hardness of heart which Peter had displayed in committing the very sin of which he had been warned, and the ingratitude of which he was guilty in denying the Lord to whom he owed so much, yet when "the Lord turned and *looked upon* Peter," the earnestness and tenderness which His countenance expressed pierced his soul, and overwhelmed him with grief and shame. And so, doubtless, it is in an inferior degree, when the image of that excellency is reflected in a servant of the Lord Jesus: the will of the individual manifested in the countenance has a force which those who are acquainted with that person's character cannot comfortably resist, opposition is disarmed, and love renders a willing compliance. That this is true with reference to Miss Bennett, all who knew her most intimately, and especially those who were her pupils, will at once remember. Her manner awoke feelings of love and commanded respect, and this, with her known firmness, gave her great authority—an authority the result of a desire to avoid giving

displeasure, not a fear of provoking anger. This influence of her look over the members of her charge used to be frequently the subject of remark among them, but appeared to be especially felt by one who was always the leader of drollery and liveliness in the school. The young lady we refer to seems to have been superior to the rule laid down in *Hudibras*,—

“ Nature to man’s soul has made no windows  
To tell the world what’s going on within doors ;”

for she had a keen perception of the indications of the thoughts from external expression. Like many other young persons, she would frequently make experiment of her powers to indulge slyly in little amusements or inattention to study, which, if observed, would in all probability elicit a rebuke. But her keen eye was always on the look-out to discern the least expression of displeasure in Miss Bennett’s countenance, in order that she might change her occupation quickly enough to escape censure. With peculiar gesticulation, and with meaning felt by all her companions, her stereotyped exclamation was, “ Oh, those eyes !” Our dear friend practised something of an ubiquitous look around ; and disdaining to mask her feelings as unworthy of her profession, that look was a true indication of them, whether of approval or of disapproval. Although amiable in expression, her eyes were piercing when directed to anything that excited attention. She had in her countenance a great power to control ; but her energetic look, commanding as it was, combined with firmness, sincerity and love. Her influence generally was well described by a gentleman who, having studied physiognomy and phrenology, ventured to declare the charac-



ters of those who submitted to his manipulations. Addressing the pupils, who had enjoyed much amusement in hearing his statements about themselves, he said with great point and accuracy about their governess, "Whatever she calls upon you to do, you feel that you have neither the power nor the wish to decline it." The feeling which prevailed among them was that her manner, and even the expression of her countenance, had an irresistible influence.

Another important principle in her system, without which there could not have been completeness or possibility of success, was *punctuality*. This, as the natural offspring of firmness, it will create no surprise to find, was strictly enforced, and carefully cultivated as a habit. None who properly value time, and realise the truth that for the diligent use or waste of it an account must be rendered, can dispute its necessity. All must admit that it is not only indispensable for the effectual discharge of duty, but is also in no slight degree conducive to comfort in the common occupations of life. In the work of tuition, it is impossible to understand any chance of satisfactory progress without it. And truly it is with an ill-formed character that any young person is introduced to the realities of life, who has not been duly impressed with a sense of the value of time, and the consequent personal advantage and social necessity of punctuality. It may be importunate in its demands, and its aspect may be very unamiable to the idle or unmethodical: doubtless it is felt sometimes to be shackling, and almost an enemy to reasonable liberty; and thus it was perhaps felt by some who were members of the establishment in which it was a standard rule; but the importance of the formation of



the habit for after life, as well as of its observance for the successful prosecution of study, was so well known, that in this matter all pleas were unheeded, and the iron rule was pressed with inflexibility. Indeed, with such precision was the rule observed, that the house was generally known and spoken of in Melton as "Punctuality Hall."

As we proceed in our narrative, and approach the establishment to make a closer inspection of the system of the school in its operation, some symptoms of rigid exactness may be suspected and objected to, as unnecessarily curtailing comfort. Firmness, strict punctuality, careful attention to religious duties, and such like, may be considered by some as harsh characteristics of the system, which would have been well exchanged for greater liberty and freer enjoyment. If, however, real happiness and usefulness be the ultimate object of education, such an idea is erroneous. Laws that are in their nature inviolable must be enforced with strictness; and where there is want of order, success in our efforts is generally defeated. It is better to submit to the stern commands of discipline than to listen to the siren voice of indulgence and ease. Obedience may be uncomfortable and inconvenient, and require much self-denial at first, but afterwards it produces fruits of comfort and satisfaction, which amply reward for all the struggles and hardships which were encountered at the outset. But it does not appear that in the case before us, notwithstanding the disciplinarian strictness we have referred to, there was anything in the tone of the pupils which would have disappointed a visitor who desired to ascertain how the system worked. In corroboration of this, and for the light which it casts

upon the system itself, we introduce the following observations from the pen of one who was formerly a pupil. Miss C—— writes :—

“Fulness of occupation alone prevents my collecting my thoughts sufficiently to say a few words, as I could wish, on the sweet character of one whom I so dearly loved and esteemed ; but there are others who will do this more ably than I could : and of her scholars I am sure there will not be one, who is not ready to add her testimony to the *felt* influence of so bright an example on the hearts and lives of those so privileged as daily to enjoy it.

“I think the thing that struck me most when, from a school where little religious privilege was enjoyed, I first entered dear Miss Bennett’s, was the wonderful degree of confidence between governess and scholars. The principle of truth, as instilled by her, was fostered by the extreme trust she reposed in her pupils, and the care she took never to suffer them to feel their word was doubted. Who *could* have deceived their governess, who with unsuspecting confidence would scarcely have found them out? We felt it a point of honour to be truthful even in little things ; and, in my time, I think few indeed were ever known to attempt deceit of any kind.

“Having been only a day-scholar, I of course am incapable of speaking of the domestic arrangements ; but that happiness reigned was plainly to be seen by the regret shewn by every boarder on leaving school.”

Another pupil, who was present at the first opening of the school, has given some interesting particulars of what took place and the feelings excited. She had also been a

stranger to such scholastic routine as was here adopted : but she is now thoroughly imbued with the spirit of it, and by her mental attainments and consistency of life does honour to her governess, and adorns the doctrine of God her Saviour. She tells us that when the first morning came, and all were assembled in the school-room, instead of the assignment of tasks and directions for their several occupations, the duties of the day were commenced in a manner which excited the surprise of many of them. The work was not to be rushed into thoughtlessly, as if mere diligence and exertion would cause it to prosper ; but it was to be “sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.” Bibles were called for, and when they were expecting to be bidden commence their reading, they were all invited to previous prayer, that the word might be as incorruptible seed sown in their hearts, and bring forth fruit to God’s glory and their comfort. Looking one towards another, there were evident symptoms of astonishment and of a disposition to say, “What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? We never saw it on this fashion.” The impression made will not easily be forgotten. In some there might be an inclination to treat it with ridicule ; but, in others, we believe it must have produced a lasting beneficial effect. Of course, the novelty of the practice was soon worn off by its daily adoption ; but the good results, we are persuaded, will not only appear in this world, but also form a subject for rejoicing among spirits of the just made perfect in the world to come. We thus learn the religious tone, and the feeling of dependence upon God for a blessing, with which she would have both teachers and scholars commence the day.

It was soon evident to her pupils, that every effort was made to relieve the irksomeness of dry application to studies. Among the methods adopted was the frequent use of anecdote, in illustrating the subject before them. In this she excelled, as many of her friends who only knew her out of school well remember. She seemed to have succeeded in culling the best and choicest anecdotes and illustrations from almost every field, and to have stored them up for use as occasion might demand. All who have had any experience in the instruction of the young, know how soon a bare lesson of principles or facts produces flagging attention, and how wearying to the teacher, as well as unprofitable to the learner, it is to proceed. In Miss Bennett's system a dull stagnation of this kind was carefully guarded against, and the slightest symptom of it was sufficient to elicit some fitting story, which, while it refreshed the mind, explained or enforced the lesson, and was calculated to impress it upon the memory. Of course, in instructing the more advanced and more highly gifted there is less need for such extraneous assistance; but to the dull it is a boon, and especially is it a valuable attainment for a teacher of the little ones. All shared alike our friend's due care; but though in her store of anecdotes, &c., she had her basket of fragments for the elder, it was for the junior members of her charge she was more plentifully provided. The younger ones were not handed over to others, as if of too little importance to engage her time, but had their share of her personal attention. Neither were the dull allowed to suffer neglect. Such are often unfortunately situated in a large school: the patience of the teacher being tried,

the misfortune is aggravated by undeserved harshness, and perhaps by neglect of the due cultivation of their inferior faculties as well. They are found a hindrance to others in class teaching, and the credit of the school suffers, if the amount of time requisite for their slower instruction be bestowed upon them. But since with such, when time and pains can be devoted, much may be effected, while in a public school, when hurried on with the rest of the class, very little real benefit can result, Miss Bennett felt that in justice to the individual, as well as to the others intrusted to her care, it was a duty to advise the removal of such a pupil, that if possible she might have the advantages of private tuition.

Not only did our friend scrupulously endeavour to do justice in all scholastic duties to her pupils of various ages and abilities, but she also carefully studied their several characters, and earnestly prayed over each of their cases. Her intuition was keen, and in perception of character she was naturally gifted; yet, to this she added watchful observation and humble asking wisdom of God. Individual difficulties were brought before the throne of grace: and it was always after much consideration, that she resolved on the mode of treatment which their peculiarities rendered necessary. Here, surely, we have the secret of success in carrying out that principle of ruling to which we have already referred; for there was scarcely any coercion beyond that of moral influence and persuasion. Tact and affection appeared to be the great controlling powers. These, however, must be possessed in large measure by the governess who would discharge her duties effectually; and they can only be acquired in sufficiency, as in the case



before us, by study, self-discipline, and prayer. There was everything in the management of the school, and in the diligent use of the means of grace, calculated, under the divine blessing, to open the hearts of the pupils to the influences of such a law of love. This will be observed as we proceed in our notice of some details.

The principal object of the Bible-class, into which the whole party was formed for a portion of the morning, was the application of what was read to the hearts and consciences, and the religious improvement of the readers. Of course, it also afforded an opportunity for much general instruction. "Nicholls' Help to Reading the Bible"\* was constantly and carefully used; and all who are acquainted with that most valuable work will infer how highly instructive and interesting this Scripture-lesson must have been. This book, the "Companion to the Bible," † and other works of the same character, are sufficient to expose the too prevalent error of regarding the Scriptures merely as the "Vade Mecum" of the devout, containing but little to satisfy the thirst for knowledge and mental advancement. The testimony of Sir Isaac Newton, Locke, and many others of the most brilliant genius, also gives a direct contradiction to it. The treasures of knowledge that are to be obtained from the study of the Bible, properly entered into with collateral research, as we should proceed in the pursuit of a science, might of themselves make the student well informed. It is recorded of Locke, that in the last few years of his life he gave himself wholly to the study of the Word of God, and

\* Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

† Religious Tract Society.

regretted that he had not done it more. While Miss Bennett chiefly set it before her charge as containing the oracles of truth, and as the principal medium of religious edification, she also justly regarded it as the treasure-house of knowledge. The mind is instructed and the taste cultivated by pondering upon its contents; its touching narratives, its sublime imagery and illustrations are unrivalled; its eloquence is such that its language is commonly interwoven with that of the most devout writers; it has "impressed its own image on the surface of human literature" generally;\* and the profane who quote it in jest, when their barren wit proves wanting,

\* A passage in the dream entitled "The Blank Bible" in "The Eclipse of Faith" truly illustrates this. It having been discovered in this dream that every Bible had become blank, it was suggested that it should be recovered piecemeal from the many books in which quotations would be found. But "on inspection, it was found that every text, every phrase which had been quoted, not only in books of devotion and theology, but in those of poetry and fiction, had been remorselessly expunged. Never before had I any adequate idea of the extent to which the Bible had moulded the intellectual and moral life of the last eighteen centuries, nor how intimately it had interfused itself with habits of thought and modes of expression, nor how naturally and extensively its comprehensive imagery and language had been introduced into human writings, and most of all, where there had been most of genius. A vast portion of literature became instantly worthless, and was transformed into so much waste-paper. It was almost impossible to look into any book of any merit, and read ten pages together without coming to some provoking erasures and mutilations, some 'hiatus valde deflendi,' which made whole passages perfectly unintelligible. Many of the sweetest passages of Shakspeare were converted into unmeaning nonsense. . . . As to Milton, he was really ruined, as might naturally be supposed. Walter Scott's novels were filled with perpetual *lacunæ*. I hoped it might be otherwise with the philosophers, and so it was; but even here it was curious to see what strange ravages the visitation had wrought. Some of the most beautiful and comprehensive of Bacon's Aphorisms were reduced to enigmatical nonsense," (P. 236.)



can scarcely refrain from pointing their ablest rhetoric with its telling expressions. The great advantage of the study of the Scriptures, educationally as well as spiritually, was therefore urged upon the pupils; and few, we are persuaded, will regret that so large a portion of time was spent upon it with such a teacher presiding, who not only gave a most serious and devout tone to the engagement, but also made it the opportunity of imparting much instruction and general information. Exception may be taken, that the church, and not the school, afforded the time and place for such religious occupation as formed an important part of Miss Bennett's system, and that it was some deviation from her trust thus to employ time, which might have been devoted to the acquirement of languages and polite accomplishments. But this objection, which we believe some parents would readily make, must arise from a short-sighted view of what school education is. It is admitted that

"The occupation dearest to her heart  
Was to encourage goodness;"

yet, not at the *expense* of education proper. The things referred to were not neglected, but they were not made the all-engrossing subjects of attention, as if they constituted the "wisdom" which Solomon says "is the principal thing." And it must be borne in mind that the intelligent and accomplished are not sent ready-made from school, as they are expected to appear in their attainments in riper years. ( Early training at school is, after all, only elementary or incipient; the mind has to depend upon subsequent application for its improvement, and the full development of its acquirements; and consequently, the instilling of an

appetite for knowledge and advancement, and the formation of habits that are favourable, are fundamental considerations. And, we may ask, what method can be so effectual in accomplishing this, as seeking to imbue the mind with religious truth, which teaches that God must be served in all things, and that for the employment of our talents He will demand an account? The hearty reception of this insures anxiety and corresponding efforts to improve the talents possessed, and thus to provide, as Bacon remarks, "a rich storehouse for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate." That instructor of youth proceeds in the surest way to secure the future proficiency, usefulness, and happiness of pupils, who believes and acts upon the declarations of the Word of truth, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," and "Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning;" for thus principle is permanently enlisted in the work which ambition might abandon.

With these feelings, the subject of this memoir encouraged her young friends to commit much of the Holy Scriptures to memory, and sought in every possible way to render them well versed therein. Those who are similarly engaged in tuition, may feel interested in one or two particulars respecting her method of encouraging the acquirement of scriptural knowledge. Of course, as we have already observed, portions were given to be learned by heart; but in this, care was taken that the mind should not be wearied by their length. A little was expected at a time, and an aggregate of what had been learned was fixed in the memory by its repetition at intervals, without being burdensome. Learning tasks is always more or

less unpalatable ; and it is a great evil, observable in many schools, that the Bible has been made so much of a *task-book*,—and frequently for the commission of the particular offences which are condemned by the portions set as tasks,—that the blessed book is positively regarded with dislike, and left unread in after years, through this extremely injudicious use of it. On this account, the exercise we are now mentioning was made a thing of enticement rather than of peremptory order. Other methods were resorted to, whereby a general acquaintance with Scripture and a recollection of it were gained ; such, for example, as the careful comparison of one passage with another, the searching for texts quoted by the teacher, and sometimes repeating the words when only the chapter and verse were given. Variety was introduced as much as possible, according to Miss Bennett's great aim, to avoid dulness and weariness in any lesson, and especially in one which she prayed might produce blessed effects upon the soul. Her desire was that her pupils should acquire a love of the Bible. And it was generally found, that the trial of dexterity and the gentle emulation that accompanied these methods excited an interest, which readily enlisted cheerful effort, and infused a desire to grow in efficiency. But the most interesting of these exercises was afforded by the public discourses of the clergymen, for the texts quoted in the course of the sermon were expected to be found, that they might be read aloud afterwards in a class formed for the purpose. This searching out of the passages quoted by the preacher was attended with other advantages : the wandering eye, the listless ear, the unseemly whisper, as well as general inat-

tention,—all had an antidote. It was a pleasing sight to see so many earnest hearers attending on the lips of the preacher, and marking every proof by which he verified his message. Nor was this performed unskilfully or unwillingly: a paucity of quotations was a disappointment; the more rapidly came the passages from the inspired volume, the happier were the listeners, and the more in favour was the preacher. The agriculturist tells us that the growing grain thrives when a gentle breeze is waving it; and it has been remarked by some who attended Melton church, that the rustling of the Bible leaves, when the busy fingers of this well-trained band were at work, resembled the sound produced by the propitious wind upon the standing corn. We trust it was a heavenly inspiration that originated the practice, and that a life-giving power co-operated with this tillage of the seed of God's Word. Of three sisters hereafter mentioned, one who died bore pleasing testimony to the benefit resulting from these various methods, by which she was made to "know the Holy Scriptures." Her struggle with the last enemy was a hard one, but she was made more than conqueror through Him who loved her. On account of extreme nervous excitability, it was necessary for her to be left much by herself during her sickness; reading or even speaking to her became at times impracticable. But she enjoyed rich consolation in Christ, and was cheered by light divine; and the medium she declared to be chiefly *the store of Scripture which had thus been committed to memory*. Referring to this source of comfort, she intreated that the same pains might be taken to implant the good seed of the Word in her children's minds, as had

been bestowed upon herself; and thus, in prospect of death, when persons rightly estimate the value of the things which have engaged their attention, she bore her testimony to the wisdom of giving diligent study of the Scriptures a prominent place in a course of school instruction.

After thus dwelling somewhat particularly upon Miss Bennett's anxious efforts to furnish her pupils with an extensive store of scriptural knowledge, and to induce them to take the Bible as their guide through life, we can well understand the pleasure and holy confidence with which she would lead her little flock to the sanctuary, that she might fold them there for "the winged hour." How her bright eye, notwithstanding the deep anxiety she felt for them, expressed her happiness! The school was not

"The house erected on the rising ground  
With tempting aspect;"

but it was conveniently situated: it was hard by the house of prayer, and was, in a manner, overshadowed by that "holy and beautiful house," the magnificence of which must be impressed on the memories of all who have ever visited it, and especially of those in whose cases there are also happy associations of a work of grace.\*

A short time after the opening of the school, when all seemed prospering, Miss Bennett was suddenly filled with deep concern and anxiety by the unexpected announcement of the retirement of the evening lecturer, whose

\* The church is a remarkably fine example of Gothic work. The Perpendicular clerestory seen from the entrance to the chancel, the Decorated Galilee porch, and the Early English lower part of the tower, for perfection of design and superior execution of the work, are severally equal to anything of the kind in existence.

appointment had afforded her such encouragement in taking the school, and whose ministry had proved so strengthening to her efforts to direct the attention of her pupils to "the one thing needful." There was only one Refuge, but that was all-sufficient and unfailing; and earnest intercessions were made that the Lord would provide. There were many difficulties in the way of obtaining a like-minded pastor, which need not be mentioned; but these were one by one removed in a manner which shewed that prayer had not been made in vain, and elicited the thankful confession, "This is the Lord's doing." "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." A well-trying and experienced minister of Christ, being disengaged, accepted the invitation, and many a heart was moved to praise as his terms of compliance were communicated—"I will come in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of His righteousness only." When we view our trials in connexion with the relief that is vouchsafed, how encouragingly do they teach the effect of prayer! They discipline the soul to more implicit reliance upon the Almighty, and preach with power that "God is love." Thus, in this trial, it would appear that the Lord designed to teach His people to cease from man, and depend more upon Him; for He sent them another pastor after His own heart. Our dear friend used to describe the new clergyman as "a giant," in reference to his well-stored mind and depth of religious experience. And, as he excelled in private ministrations, she soon found that in him was a helper suited to the requirements of her portion of his flock. His conversational intelligence, his extensive information, and his



abundance of narrative, combined with his earnestness, made her especially anxious to secure for her young charge the benefit of his private instructions; and with him commenced the advantage, so highly prized by the heads and many of the pupils of this establishment, of the clergyman's attendance and assistance in inculcating religious truth. In these visits, which were willingly continued by some of the succeeding clergymen, Miss Bennett enjoyed much comfort. Her own instructions were confirmed, solemn truths were kindly enforced, and her pupils' knowledge was also tested. The advantages were felt to be great, and many now look back upon them with thankfulness.

But a change soon occurred, through the resignation of the Vicar, which resulted in Miss Bennett's withdrawal from the services of Melton church. She had before her a choice of difficulties. She considered it a duty, for the sake of herself and her pupils, to seek such ministerial instruction as she could heartily approve; and yet it was with the greatest reluctance that she left the church of her own parish. Many were the prayers for guidance, and soon a way was made plain.

Within three miles was the small village of Wyfordby, where for a long time there had been a succession of faithful ministers. The mention of Wyfordby will recall to the minds of many of our readers delightful hours of communion with God, both in the quiet village church, and on the way thither. The church of this sequestered hamlet is dear to many, who, but for the circumstances we have alluded to, would scarcely have known it. The parishioners being few in number, there was room for a



considerable accession to the congregation; and to this little church the longing eyes of Miss Bennett were turned, hoping almost against hope there to be able to find pasture. The obstacles appeared at first insurmountable. Pleasant as it might be for individuals to accomplish the walk occasionally, how could the school undertake it regularly with safety? Among so many, some were weak, and some too young to walk. But, in a matter which she deemed so important, expense and inconvenience were not allowed to be hindrances. These were counted as nothing, compared with the great spiritual gain which it was believed would result. An omnibus was purchased which could convey half the number, and, in the event of a shower coming on, would be a refuge for most of them. Her brother-in-law furnished a horse, and his old servant was the driver; and thus the privilege of attending the scriptural services of the Church of our fathers, and of enjoying therewith such a ministration of the Word of life as she could attend with comfort, was secured. The arrangement proved rich in blessing. The tone of piety in many of the worshippers, united with the fervour of the clergyman, helped to stir up "devotion's quickening power;" and the accordant inscription on the wall within the church, "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven," had an experimental commentary in many a heart. After attending this church for a year or two, the Sabbath-day's journey was shortened through the appointment of the Rector of Wyfordby to the parish of Thorpe Arnold. The church of this place was considerably nearer, and also larger than that of Wyfordby, and therefore the members

of the school, and many inhabitants of Melton, gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of worshipping there. In a short time, the living of Melton Mowbray was put in sequestration; an admirable appointment to the curacy was made by the Bishop; and, through the liberality of the parishioners, an assistant Curate was soon engaged. When this change occurred, Miss Bennett's heart leaped for joy, and quickly did she enlist the assistance of these men of God in the great work which she had in hand. The real watching for souls which characterised her life was manifest; and gladly did they avail themselves of the opportunity of strengthening her hands in her labour of love. Governess and pastors realised the fact that they were serving one Master, and were fellow-labourers in the same vineyard; and we have reason for believing that they will hereafter rejoice together in having souls given them for their hire. It is to be wished that such united effort were more common among the clergy and heads of private schools, and that stated times were set apart for ministerial visits, when, with reading of the Word of God and prayer, the young of our middle classes might be urged to seek the pleasantness of a religious life. While the affectionate exhortations given on such occasions confirm the advice and instruction imparted by the master or governess, they are also, under the divine blessing, productive of greater readiness of mind to attend to the word spoken by the minister from the pulpit.

The seasons of Confirmation were especially times in which Miss Bennett hoped to see some fruit of their labours; and in her experience they proved triennial har-

vests of good, when the treader of grapes seemed to overtake him that soweth seed. She had no sympathy with those who despised the rite, because of its frequent abuse ; but, knowing that every precious means of grace provokes a corresponding effort on the part of the enemy to destroy its usefulness, and cause it to be lightly esteemed, she sought the more earnestly, by diligent instruction and supplication, to render it a profitable ordinance to those committed to her care. The Clergymen were sensibly alive to its advantages, and their painstaking efforts in connexion with it were crowned with much success. Many of those whom they prepared for this apostolic rite were trained in spirit by the Great Teacher, and made meet to be partakers of the Holy Communion, in which they steadfastly continued to renew their vows, and pledge their love and loyalty to their dying Lord. The labours of many of these as missionaries, or in other spheres of usefulness, now bear witness to the blessedness of these seasons ; and there are others, we doubt not, who, having accomplished the work given to them to do, have found that "not one thing hath failed of all the good things which God" in that covenant spake concerning them. Of course, in the work of preparing her pupils for this sacred ordinance, Miss Bennett had great assistance from her pastors. Her continual prayer was, that they might come in "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel," and she rejoiced in their visits, especially as she beheld the good effects which were visible. But it devolved upon her to strive to "break up the fallow ground" to receive the seed ; and well did she water the seed sown with her prayers and tears.

We have a glimpse of her usefulness on these occasions

in a statement made by one of her former pupils, whose amiability and consistency have long illustrated her principles. She informs us, that after much labour bestowed, it was Miss Bennett's practice to finish her instructions on the subject of Confirmation with a private interview, when she would most earnestly speak to and pray with each candidate. This was the season, when her religious feeling and loving anxiety beamed upon her young friends in a most affecting manner. As each left her presence, none could fail to feel that the yearning expression of her who longed to be their spiritual mother was really melting ; it bespoke a heart embrace, and a silent benediction. Some of those who were thus pleaded with, and fervently commended to the mercy of Him to whom they were about publicly to dedicate themselves, have exchanged the tongues of men for those of angels, and they would best describe the interview. The lady referred to believes, that in her time, all were so impressed thereby, that, however it might be forgotten for a season by some, it could never altogether be obliterated. No doubt can be entertained, that the instructions given in the school preparatory to Confirmation have already formed a subject of thanksgiving with many, and to many more they may still recur with blessed effects.

It cannot be too strongly urged upon those who have the charge of the young, and desire to bring them up in the fear of the Lord, to make much of these times, which have proved to such numbers seasons of grace and of refreshing from His presence.

Miss Bennett's fervent desire being to see her pupils enter into an abiding union with Christ, she urged upon

them the duty of compliance with the dying wish of the loving Saviour, to whom in Confirmation they had professed to give themselves. She knew from her own happy experience, that the Lord's Supper was really a feast for "the strengthening and refreshing" of the soul, and thus a most valuable means of grace; and, therefore, it was with her a subject of particular anxiety, that those in whom she took such a deep interest should become partakers of an ordinance so productive of growth in grace. She felt that in this holy sacrament, there is practically a constant renewal of those Confirmation vows, by which we acknowledged our baptismal obligations, and dedicated ourselves to God. She rejoiced in it as "the communion of the body of Christ," by partaking of which, while we take afresh our oath of allegiance, we strengthen the bond of union with our Divine Head and with all His members. And who can doubt, that to those "who truly and earnestly repent of their sins, are in love and charity with their neighbours, intend to lead a new life" of obedience, and "draw near with faith," that it is a richly flowing channel of strength and comfort? The "deep searchings of heart," the repentance and humiliation, the contemplation of the passion by which our redemption was purchased, and the love inspired by such an affecting reminder of His matchless love, are, through the power of the Holy Ghost, eminently calculated to establish, strengthen, and settle the believer. Besides all this, there is accessory influence, such as the more select assembly of the faithful, admonishing us what manner of persons we ought to be, if we take a place among them at this spiritual feast; and there is a foretaste of the pleasure of heaven's society in the refined

enjoyment of Christian fellowship. The accession of young communicants, therefore, is a sight gladdening indeed to the hearts of those who, from their own enjoyment of this ordinance, know how sweet its moments and how rich in blessing. ( For if they come, led by the Spirit, to whom the preparation of the heart belongs, in humility, faith, and charity, it is a divine repast of which they partake. To them it is a feast upon the great sacrifice, and the prefiguration of "the marriage-supper of the Lamb." For them the Eternal King provides a spiritual banquet and vestments, as pledges of a love that shall not fail. The voice of the Bridegroom gives them the welcome, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved,"\* "and the Spirit and the bride say, Come."† And as we eat of that bread and drink of that cup, when the mind and affections are concentrated upon Him, and we meditate upon His dying love, and that "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice," perfumed with the sweet incense of His merits, we can enter into the rapturous feelings of Hooker when he said, "Is there not a taste, a taste of Christ Jesus in the heart of him that eateth? Doth not he which drinketh behold plainly in this cup, that his soul is bathed in the blood of the Lamb? O beloved in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, if ye will taste how sweet the Lord is, if ye will receive the King of glory,"‡ "draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort."§

It was in assurance that such spiritual pleasure, and such a realisation of the presence of Him who bade us thus "shew forth His death until He come," was to be

\* Sol. Song, v. 1.

† Rev. xxii. 17.

‡ Hooker (Sermon vi. 11.)

§ Communion Service.



enjoyed, that our friend called upon her young professors to "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said," "Do this in remembrance of me;" and fervent and frequent were her prayers that, in fulfilling this command, they might "eat the fat and drink the sweet" of heavenly food—be strengthened for the conflicts which, as soldiers of Jesus Christ, they must carry on—and receive grace to continue "faithful unto death."

When the morning arrived for her newly-confirmed pupils to communicate for the first time, it was her practice to present each with a "Companion to the Lord's Table," hoping that it might not only assist them in preparation for future occasions of communicating, but also be a memento of the owner's vows, and plead with them for a faithful adherence to the Master of whose bread they had eaten. It would speak to the thoughtful of the heart-breathings of the giver on that memorable day, and often recall to mind the faithful friend whose tongue is now silent in the tomb, but who, although dead, yet speaketh most impressively in the recollections of her deeds, and of the spirit by which she was actuated. It was a day much to be remembered by her little flock, who were thus introduced to the full privileges of church-membership. They cannot forget the solemnity of the occasion, and the feeling with which Miss Bennett's manner and tone inspired the whole school, that it was a day demanding more than ordinary seriousness. As she preceded them in their approach to the communion-table, and, like a mother in Christ, presented them to the King who presides at that sacred feast, praise and prayer filled her soul,—praise for the grace which had made them willing to yield



themselves unto the Lord, and to place themselves under this powerful check against sin and relapse,—and prayer, that constancy might be given them to witness through life a good confession. And so great was the interest felt in her efforts to train up a generation to serve the Lord, that many a soul in the congregation was similarly engaged in offering on their behalf supplications to the King of heaven. “Many friendly eyes were upon them, and many affectionate arms around and underneath them.”

The privilege afforded by a frequent administration of the Lord’s Supper which was enjoyed at Melton was a great blessing, we believe, in keeping these young professors steadfast in His covenant. Monthly, at least, was the opportunity afforded them of publicly renewing their vows, and seeking the benefit to be derived from this means of grace. It was as a golden chain of love to hold them fast. He who turned and looked upon Peter when he denied Him, and filled him with such penitent remorse, would meet them in this oft-recurring rite, and restrain declension thereby. The effect will be anticipated by those of our readers who know the power of prayer. Numbers of these, who were thus led early and frequently to bind themselves to the horns of the altar, still rejoice there to “offer and present themselves, their souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice” unto their God; and some, having put off this tabernacle, with a joy of which they had foretastes in this sacred ordinance while on earth, do now “with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, laud and magnify his glorious name; evermore praising him, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of

hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory : glory be to thee, O Lord most high." \*

The great watchfulness with which she followed the labours which had been so richly blessed to her pupils, might well be taken as an example by parents and those to whom the young are intrusted for education. The Christian character of those of whom we have been speaking was, as it were, launched ; but it was on the ocean of a treacherous world, where the elements would not always seem propitious in the course they had chosen, and where many a temptation would entice them to steer among rocks upon which faith might be made shipwreck. "The pomps and vanities of this wicked world" have proved the destruction of multitudes of fairly-promising young disciples. The natural depravity of the heart gives an appetite for forbidden pleasure, and their unsuspecting minds are too easily influenced by the plausible representations of those who dread them becoming righteous overmuch. The contemplation of worldly seduction drew from this earnest guardian many a sigh. Nothing could be further from her than austere to denounce lawful pleasure ; but her love of her Master and of souls rendered her firm in discountenancing everything which she was persuaded was "of the world." Remembering what is written, "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," † any gaiety which she was convinced had a tendency to draw away the soul from God and diminish the relish for divine things, she set before her pupils as injurious, and persuaded them carefully to avoid it. The very safe rule adopted by Hewitson corresponded precisely

\* Communion Service.

† 1 Tim. v. 6.

with hers—"No amusement is innocent which takes away the soul from Jesus, or does what it can to take it away."\* We can understand the pain with which she would observe some forsaking "the guide of their youth," and loving this present world, so far as not to abstain from those things which had been pointed out as evil. But it was in a most loving and affecting manner that she sought to check any such propensities in a senior pupil. We are told by one who had once excited her anxiety in this manner, and was faithfully dealt with by her, that in her conversation there was not even a word of reproof, but that her countenance did it all. There was to be read in her look such an affectionate wish that she had not gone astray, that the wanderer was overpowered with regret.

But it is important to observe, that while Miss Bennett discouraged engagements which she considered productive of lukewarmness or worldliness of spirit, she was careful to give her pupils opportunities of social intercourse with truly earnest and consistent persons. Every encouragement compatible with school discipline, was given to such engagements as were calculated to promote an interest in the service and servants of God, and instil a spiritual taste which would refuse the evil and choose the good. Every effort was made to cultivate in them a spirit, which could breathe the sentiments contained in Bonar's lines—

"Not with the trifler gay,  
To whom life seems but sunshine on the wave;  
Not with the empty idler of a day—  
My lot be with the wise and grave:

\* Memoir of the Rev. W. H. Hewitson, p. 61.

With them I'd walk each day ;  
From them Time's solemn lessons I would learn,  
That false from true, and true from false, I may  
More faithfully discern."

The elder pupils were introduced to meetings of established Christians, and were encouraged to take part in such works of piety and charity as have been found of great value in the promotion of personal religion, whilst designed for the temporal and spiritual welfare of others. School duties did not prevent her from appearing in the various benevolent and religious movements in the parish ; and this gave her opportunities of enlisting the assistance of such of her charge as " had a mind to work," and possessed the necessary qualifications.

As a District Visitor our honoured governess was most efficient. The duties of this office, she remembered, were imposed by the divine sympathy of our blessed Lord, and the fulfilment of them He declared would be accepted as done unto Him. While many in her position, with its close application and many cares, would have pleaded constant occupation as a reason for being excused undertaking such an office, she rejoiced to have this opportunity of manifesting her grateful love for Him, who for man's sake often suffered fatigue, and with wearied body " went about doing good." With a heart so thoroughly devoted to her Lord, she found it a happy relief from scholastic engagements to employ a portion of her leisure in visiting the sick and poor, enlivening them with her conversation, and striving to create or increase in them an interest in their souls' health and in the true riches. Her work in this capacity was done thoroughly. The district

assigned to her had a perfect superintendence: the temporal wants of its poor inhabitants not only received attention when brought before her, but were sought out and relieved. The funds of the Benevolent Society might have been drawn upon, but her liberality sent her chiefly to her own resources. It has been remarked, that cases of distress were so quickly known and so promptly attended to, that no stranger could be first in their discovery and relief. In distributing tracts, in seeing that the poor were supplied with Bibles and religious books, that they attended public worship, that the children were sent to school, that bad and good habits were suitably dealt with, that error was not disseminated, and in everything that thoughtfulness and sedulous attention could suggest, she was indefatigable, and the more successful because so much beloved. Her delight in the work and her efficiency eminently qualified her for training others in its duties. She always found some of her senior pupils ready to render her assistance in this good work, and often were the poor and afflicted visited and comforted by those who, under her care, were not only receiving instruction in secular wisdom, but in that which "is more precious than rubies," and in the discharge of those duties towards Christ and His poor, which must ever adorn the life of His sincere servants.

There appeared a threefold blessing attending this portion of her labours: while there were good results among the persons visited, and also she herself found that in watering others her own soul was watered, there was, moreover, a valuable preparation of young ladies for the efficient discharge of similar errands of mercy in

parishes far away, in which God might appoint their habitation in after life. The great day alone can declare the results of this portion of her labour. May she not have been the honoured instrument of inspiring some with a Christ-like spirit of caring for the poor, and thus of introducing messengers of love to many a family who, through God's blessing upon their efforts, shall be found at the last a part of the glorious family of the redeemed, who shall dwell in the mansions of our Father's house?

We have to follow her yet into another sphere of usefulness, on which, alas! in many parishes there appears among the educated an unwillingness to enter—the Sunday School. It is observed also, that the majority of Sunday School Teachers are persons whose time is fully occupied in business or necessary engagements during the week, and that comparatively few of those to whom God has given a sufficiency of this world's goods, independently of their own labour and exertions, come forward to work among the young on the only day, on which many of them can be brought under the influence of religious instruction. Miss Bennett, notwithstanding all her pressing and harassing duties, felt constrained by the love of Christ to deny herself the quiet which she might have enjoyed on the Sabbath, and to take a part in the efforts made to train up the children of the parish “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The opportunity thus presented of preparing her pupils for such usefulness, upon the completion of their education, also formed a consideration which influenced her greatly. After leaving school, those who had tasted in any degree the sweetness of God's service would not be content without engaging in some



such employment; and, considering also that many of them would occupy positions of influence in the different places to which they would be scattered, it was of the greater importance to give them an insight into, and a taste for, those duties by the fulfilment of which that influence would be for good.\* Moreover, what an efficacious means of keeping alive their own religion, and of filling them with a sense of the necessity of consistency, would such a position be to them, when beyond the reach of the counsel and warning of their "Christian Governess!" If, for a moment, we contemplate the heart-work of a faithful teacher, we shall see how much there is to instruct, quicken, and build up in our most holy faith. There is the closet-prayer for wisdom, love, and faithfulness, and for grace to live according to the laws in which instruction is given to the children; there is the careful and devout study of the Holy Scriptures, in preparation for the lessons to be given in the class; and also the frequent bearing of each child before God on the breastplate of intercessory prayer. Then, again, there is the interest with which fruits are looked for, and the joy and thankfulness with which they are sometimes seen; but, even if this encouragement be not vouchsafed, there is the exercise of faith † in the comfortable assurance of the Master

\* Many of the remarks which will be found in the letters, shew that in this respect her labour was "not in vain in the Lord."

† "To bring a man to love God—to love the law of God, while it condemns him—to loathe himself before God—to tread the earth under his feet—to hunger and thirst after God in Christ—with man this is impossible. But God has said, *It shall be done*, and bids me go forth and preach, that by me, as His instrument, He may effect these great ends; and therefore I go."—*Cecil's Remains*.



concerning His word, "It shall not return unto me void."\* And, with all this, there is the happy consciousness of doing something for Christ,—of endeavouring to feed the lambs for whom He so tenderly shewed His love. It was in this manner and with these feelings that our friend herself discharged the duties of the office, and it was this earnest spirit she sought to instil into the minds of those whom she introduced to the work. There were other advantages connected with this work in Melton. The respected Clergymen not only attended the Sunday School to advise and assist, but also held meetings of Teachers for prayer and exposition of the Scriptures, at which papers on subjects calculated to test their religious knowledge and piety were given in, and discussion tending to edification was encouraged. This privilege Miss Bennett and her young teachers regularly availed themselves of, and the grateful recollections of many still elicit the testimony, "It was good for us to be there."

It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the attendance of the members of the school was always to be depended upon at the public meetings of the different religious societies, whose claims were commended to the consideration of the parishioners. While it was frequently a subject of regret, that so few met on these occasions to hear of the triumphs of the cross, the lady, whose history we are attempting to give, lived in contrast to her neighbours' failings in this respect, and endeavoured, by counsel and the appeal of better example, to shew them "a more excellent way." "Miss Bennett's young ladies, and a few others," was, we are informed, too frequently the true description of a

\* Isaiah lv. 11.

Melton audience at these meetings. To engage the interest of the young in the work carried on by the different societies for the circulation of the Scriptures and the preaching of the gospel, was so thoroughly in unison with the system of training adopted and the principles upon which it was founded, that she and her fellow-helper were careful not to allow these opportunities of good to pass by unimproved. And in order that any impressions made by the information and appeals of the speakers might be productive, and the interest excited not be suffered to die away, as it too commonly does, various plans were devised and carried out in the school for assisting in the works of which they had heard. It may be interesting to mention one or two of these.

In her grateful sense of the mercy of possessing the pure light of the gospel, Miss Bennett was often moved with compassion for those who sat in the darkness of Popish superstition, and was forward to support such as laboured to bring them out of error. Her fellow-subjects, thus benighted, received her first sympathy, and Ireland furnished a field, on which to bestow the efforts which she contemplated. The great hope of ridding that land from the curse of Popery appears to be in the education of the children of Roman Catholics, and to this work she resolved to render assistance. A school had been established at Larne, in the north of Ireland, which was conducted entirely on principles which she approved, where the children of Protestants and Roman Catholics were educated together; and, as this school was in need of voluntary aid, it was taken under her patronage, and a considerable sum was annually raised for it. This gave

rise to one of the standing charities of the establishment at Melton. A bazaar was held on the premises every year, and was busily worked for both by principals and scholars; and Larne school continued to the last to receive steady support. Many things contributed to make this labour of love a delight, rather than a burden: the exercise of ingenuity and taste in producing useful and fancy articles, the pleasant anticipation of the day of exhibition and sale, the statements received from time to time of the results in Ireland, and the satisfaction of doing good, all had a tendency to gratify the juvenile benefactors, and to excite an interest, whilst, at the same time, the germ of a fruitful Christian life was in this manner developed. Twelve pounds was the sum required; but the amount realised at the bazaar always exceeded this. Upon Miss Bennett's retirement from the school at Melton, she instituted a subscription, chiefly among her former pupils, by which she was enabled to continue the assistance, which had contributed so materially to the maintenance of the good work at Larne; and we are thankful to say, that in this respect her work remains; the subscriptions are still collected by one who is affectionately interested in perpetuating the work of her departed governess, as well as in serving the cause which is aided by it.\*

With so much zeal for the restoration of the truth to those who are in error, and for the conversion of the

\* Some of Miss Bennett's pupils and friends may be glad of the information, that contributions towards the support of Larne School are thankfully received by Miss Wright, Shoby House, Melton Mowbray, who will be happy to forward the reports and particulars concerning the school to any who may be desirous of contributing.

heathen, it may be asked, what were Miss Bennett's feelings towards the Jews? She was by no means forgetful that it was written, "Beginning at Jerusalem," and "To the Jew first." This authoritative sentiment was fully adopted, and she did not fail to act upon it. She was a zealous friend of the "Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews;" and the London "Philojudæan Society," for relieving their temporal wants, also had her energetic support. It was never forgotten by her, how "the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things;" for it was her devout pleasure to strive to be a "worker together with Him," in being instrumental in conveying the blessings to the seed of Abraham. "Blessed is he that blesseth thee," was engraven on her heart, as well as on her memory. That paradoxical race, of which, "as concerning the flesh, Christ came,"—supremely honoured, yet abject and despised,—were regarded by her with peculiar sympathy. She ranged herself with those who answered to the prophecy, and appropriated the language of the prophet—"We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you."\* It was with feelings of great satisfaction she availed herself of the opportunity of receiving a Jewess into the school; and the enjoyment of many advantages in the consequent intercourse with the father of the young Israelite seemed, even in this life, a fulfilment of the promise of a blessing. He was a converted Jew, and a Clergyman of the Church of England; and, being a man of superior abilities and attainments, and having been brought up as a Rabbi, his visits to the school were exceedingly profitable, through his interesting descriptions

\* Zech. viii. 23.

of Hebrew manners and customs, which cast so much light upon the meaning of many passages of Holy Scripture. With his phylacteries and other paraphernalia, hallowed by their connexion with Bible story, he entertained and informed his young audience. But Miss Bennett's love of the Jews and zeal for their welfare manifested themselves in a manner, which enlisted the interest and assistance of her young household, and originated a system which might well be introduced into many families as well as schools. A stock of fancy work was collected and sold for their benefit. One evening in each week was appropriated to working, and all in the school, who were capable, lent a helping hand. The productions of these working parties, and the contributions received from friends, were kept for sale in a large wicker package, suitable for carriage to any house in the town where it might be required, or for longer journeys. It was introduced at parties, where the interests of the kinsmen of our Lord and of His apostles were likely to meet with sympathy; and it travelled with its originator on her vacation visits, thus pleading for the Jew and promoting efforts for his welfare; while it was also the unconscious instrument of suggesting profitable topics of conversation in many a gathering of friends, not only in Melton, but in the numerous places to which it was conveyed. Nor was this all; for we know more instances than one, in which the establishment of a similar basket, or of a system of working for the benefit of some religious society, may be traced to the visit of our friend and her package. The disbanding of its original promoters, at the dissolution of the school, did not cause it to be abandoned. It found pity in its

orphanage, and another guardian took charge of it ; consequently, it still goes its rounds. It pays its visits now to many a party as no new acquaintance ; there are those who look with favour on it, as on an old friend, and, with happy recollections of the refreshing intercourse they have had with its originator, take pleasure in its stereotyped name, "The Jews' Basket."

To dwell at greater length upon details relating to the school might be irksome, and it is unnecessary in an attempt to set forth the character of Miss Bennett, and the principles upon which she acted. There remains one thing to be noticed : in this, her more public position, it would be impossible but that offences should come ; yet, by walking wisely towards them that were without, and circumspectly towards all, her care to give no offence in anything was very successful. One of her leading rules was, to put a charitable construction upon the motives and actions of others ; and another of equal importance was, to exercise the greatest watchfulness and prayerfulness in the government of the tongue. Suspiciousness was regarded with instinctive abhorrence, and the bridling of the tongue was felt to be an unceasing necessity. The loveliness of her character and the faultlessness of her conduct in these particulars, was universally acknowledged. It was the observation of one, who frequently complained of the unkind and disparaging statements circulated about him, "I can never track Miss Bennett by the scent of aspersion ;" and the truth of the remark made by him was felt by all, so careful was she to let her conversation in every respect be as became the gospel of Christ.

Long and diligent service had impaired her health, and



on the appearance of symptoms of failing strength, Miss Ayre, a lady of settled principles and superior accomplishments, had been admitted as a third partner, and this enabled them to continue the management of the school for some years; but at length Miss Bennett's increasing weakness gave warning of the approaching end of her scholastic career. As her elder partner was also declining, the three resolved to terminate their work together. They were anxious that a post in which, through grace, they had been enabled to do so much for God amongst a rising generation, should not be vacated, until a successor was found who would carry on the work in the same spirit; and, for this reason, they deferred their retirement. After a time, a lady professing similar principles came forward to treat with them, and a resignation ensued.

After reading the imperfect sketch we have given of Miss Bennett's abundant and self-denying labours, all will agree that in her case there was no rusting, but that our good governess may be truly said to have worn out, as to her strength for school duties. She complained but little; yet all who knew and observed her could plainly perceive, that "faint yet pursuing" was the frame in which her efforts were made, when the expiration of her term of office in training the young for God was drawing nigh. Sickness invaded, and made her frequently a painful worker, and sometimes merely a spectator. But, in the latter case, she rejoiced in the opportunity afforded her of more uninterrupted intercession, and what might be occasionally thus lost in labour was compensated for in blessing. The interests of the school, as an agency for carrying on



God's work, had always had her earnest prayers ; but, now that declining strength demanded her retirement, they were carried with greater earnestness, if possible, to the throne of grace. At that throne she received her commission, and there she resigned it. In the midsummer of 1852 she retired into more private life, after fifteen years of active service in this part of the Lord's vineyard.

It will have been observed, in the history presented in this chapter, that it has not been the object to enter into her system of secular education, so much as to present to the reader a servant of the Lord Jesus going on in the even tenor of her way, turning to advantage all that she possessed, and all that befell her, to the end *that Christ might be magnified and His kingdom enlarged*. She did not underrate, or in any way neglect, what are usually termed "accomplishments ;" but she felt the first duty of a "Christian governess" to be the inculcation of true religion, that thus character might be moulded upon principles which would be approved by the Lord of all, and secure a blessing in eternity, as well as a useful career in time. A faithful discharge of the important duties of such a responsible position, when followed by so many cheering instances of successful training for useful lives and peaceful deaths, may, therefore, well engage the attentive consideration of those who occupy similar spheres of labour, and must afford delight to all who rejoice in the sufficiency of that grace, which alone can render us faithful in our several stewardships.

The observation is common, that "virtue has its own reward ;" and, upon the highest authority, it has been declared that "godliness" has the "promise of the life

that now is." In the whole of the busy and holy life which we are reviewing, there was, under circumstances apparently unpropitious, an air of happiness, which we cannot pass over without remark. Whence did it arise? It was an illustration of the truth of the Spirit's assurance above quoted: she trusted in, and was at peace with "the living God." Health is proverbially amongst the first of earthly blessings, and without it, humanly speaking, there is no enjoyment; but this higher principle of holy confidence in God surmounts even its necessity, and we have a beautiful example of this before us. Our dear, departed friend was habitually cheerful. She had a well-spring of joy above,—her mind was stayed on God, as all her salvation and all her desire. She was taught to adopt and feel the exclamation, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee!" She realised the much longed-for "closer walk with God," and enjoyed "a calm and heavenly frame." It was her endeavour to set Him always before her; His word, His works, His attributes, His providence and grace were constant subjects of her meditation, and filled her with abiding delight. Now, she was constitutionally feeble, and the ailments she suffered had a tendency to produce weariness and depression; in rising, then, above the waves and billows, and manifesting a cheerfulness which was seldom observed to flag, she strikingly exemplified how "the kingdom of God," which "is not meat and drink," is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." An extract from a letter, written by one who had the best opportunity of judging of her character and habits, will here be read with interest,

on account of the pleasing testimony it bears in connexion with these remarks.

A former assistant-governess writes :—“ All who knew Miss Bennett knew her unaffected piety, her devotion to all that was good, her great kindness of heart and unostentatious charity. I can safely say, that, after living with her nine years, I cannot recall one word or deed of hers unbecoming her character as a genuine Christian ; and, though suffering much from delicate health, and being harassed by her arduous duties and the responsibilities that devolved upon her, she was ever cheerful, and delighted in seeing others so too. She was always ready to promote any enjoyment or amusement for her pupils, that she thought consistent or proper for them ; and frequently, until failing health prevented, joined in their pastimes during the hours of recreation. I do not recollect having one unkind word from her, or hearing her speak harshly to others. The only time I can call to mind anything like a disagreement between us was on one occasion, when I had spent the evening out. I found, on my return, that some flowers which I had left in the drawing-room had been sent away. I inquired who had done it. Miss Bennett, hearing me, said that she had. I (thinking she had been influenced by others) spoke, I fear, warmly. I shall never forget the look and smile she gave me, when she said, ‘ My dear Miss ——, do not let us quarrel about such sweet things as flowers.’ Hers is, indeed, a beautiful character ; and I consider it one of my greatest privileges to have lived so long and intimately with her.”

These facts form a beautiful commentary on what Solomon says of true religion, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." In whatever qualified sense we are constrained to interpret these words, in a world still under the curse of sin, they are at least unquestionable, when the enjoyment of life by the righteous is compared with the experience of the grossly wicked, or even of the worldly. The happiness which we have just dwelt upon, as characterising the subject of this memoir, will challenge any argument to the contrary. We do not say that she never underwent the discipline of trouble, or was a stranger to dejection. "What son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" Chastisement afterwards "yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby;" and there is many a "needs be" for it in the most advanced believer. God does "not afflict willingly;" and the Christian knows that there is a shorter way out of trouble than that, which the insubordination of the natural heart usually allows to be taken. The spirit of more willing obedience was given to Miss Bennett, and hence she walked in this "royal road;" the heavy burden of trouble was sooner taken from her, or lightened, whilst in either case "the joy of the Lord" was her strength. That which is bitter becomes agreeable with an admixture of sweetness; and suffering is often rejoiced in and triumphed over by holy resignation to the will of God. Thus it was in the case before us. We know that this is a subject which they who are strangers to this peace cannot comprehend. It is one of the secrets of the Lord, which are only understood by "them that fear Him." But those who had opportunities of observing her

during times of affliction and trial, must have felt that "rejoicing in tribulation" is a mysterious reality. The ungodly may deny the truth of such professed experience, but the Christian's privilege is too frequently enjoyed to be doubted.

While the contemplation of such a holy and happy life as that before us, tends to confirm us in the conviction that "godliness is great gain," it also excites thoughts of the painful contrast it affords to that of the worldly and ungodly. The gains of godliness, instead of being un-serviceable in the hour of sorrow, prove themselves to be "the true riches." Moreover, they are continually increasing,—“for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,”—and, in addition to their profitableness in this life, the durable riches of righteousness are treasured up, not like gold for condemnation in "the day of wrath," but to be held as abiding possessions. Alas! how different the lot of those who live not for eternity, but, as spendthrifts, throw all their talents away upon the transient and fading enjoyments of time! Their possessions are in "a bag with holes," or run out with the hour-glass. They have made no covenant with death, and cannot rein in the speed of time. This is a sore reflection, which *will* obtrude itself. The conspicuous milestones on the journey of life are unwelcome ghosts, which they must pass, and they cannot altogether escape their hauntings. It is with feelings of sadness they find their years count thirty; with deeper feelings of regret, they reach forty; at fifty, they see a dark cloud foreshadowing "the evil days;" and at sixty, they perceive their lease of life to be a miserable remnant, and the title uncertain; or they are conscious

that they are drifting rapidly in a leaky vessel to an unknown somewhere, with a hope forlorn. Possibly among their many endeavours to banish these uncomfortable thoughts, they dream of taking a place in the camp of those who are following on "to know the Lord." They are told, and truly, that mercy waits upon the most unthankful scorner, and that the door is open until death closes it. They make what, in their long-established indolence and ignorance, they count an effort: but, oh! how frequently is it a failure, and repetition is a failure still. They

"Resolve, and re-resolve, and die the same."

Often "the god of this world" so blinds the minds of the disobedient, that if the surpassing enjoyment of the godly be pressed upon their attention, they stop their ears like the deaf adder: much less can you persuade them, that in the course of the most self-denying Christians, and in the sinks of poverty even, and in the depths of affliction, (where are often found embedded some of the richest gains of godliness,\*) pleasantness and peace are known in a fulness, which makes the best of earthly joys and comforts appear but trifles. The "joy unspeakable and full of glory," so well known to the believer, as a stay in discouragements and an incentive to grateful diligence, is a mystery which such cannot comprehend, for they only "mind earthly things." On the other hand, observe those who, like our departed friend, "have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God," that they "might know the things that are freely given"

\* See this fully exemplified in cases mentioned in that interesting little book, entitled, "Life Work."



to them "of God,"—to "know both divine mysteries and divine mercies, both what God hath done for them and what He hath wrought in them." Their face is set towards the heavenly Jerusalem. Their life is a crusade, in which they "fight the good fight," and in which they finish their course, keeping the faith. The Lord God "is their help and their shield;" and, girt with "the sword of the Spirit," and taking "the helmet of salvation," they go on their way rejoicing. As they pass the successive marks of life's progress,

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,"

is "the word" they receive from those sentinels of distance. The flight of time grieves them only because it has not been duly improved, and self-reproach quickens them to redeem the remainder. They realise the truth that here they "have no continuing city," and, therefore, earnestly "seek one to come." "Forgetting those things which are behind," they linger not in the plain, but reach "forth unto those things which are before." They are content to buffet with trials on the road, and to have their confidence tested by clouds around: when alarm assaults, it does but drive them to walk more closely with their God; and, if honoured with great conflict, and if the things that are seen and temporal appear all against them, they oftentimes get by faith a telescopic vision of their future, in which they behold in the horizon the glimmerings of the radiant exit, where the dark clouds are tinged with the reflection of coming glory which mortal eye neither hath seen nor can see. Thus God is the support and "exceeding great reward" of the righteous in life's journey, as well as in their final rest. But call the attention of the worldly to this, and they repudiate it; to them

it appears altogether a delusion. It is not difficult to tell the reason. They are on the Egyptian side, and see only the cloud in the daytime; being dead in sin, they perceive not how God our Maker "giveth songs in the night" to His children, and "light in their dwellings" when all is dark around. They cannot deny that there is in their hearts a vacuum, created by cravings after happiness, which, rejecting God the Christian's exceeding joy, they seek in vain to satisfy. Surely, this should plead with them the wisdom of endeavouring to imitate our dear friend and her fellow-pilgrims, who, leaving sublunary resources, mounted up with wings as eagles, and soared towards the throne of the Divine Majesty.

Another remark suggested by the consideration of the consistent and devoted character we have sketched is, the comparative smallness of the number of professors who adhere so truly to their principles, and manifest such enviable happiness in their religion. The standard with which the majority content themselves is, alas! so low that the world might with much justice ask, "What do ye more than others?" and, consequently, their obedience being so defective, and their service only half-hearted, their joy in the Holy Ghost does not abound to the praise and glory of God's grace. How little, for instance, is that compendium of our religion, the Lord's Prayer, reduced to practice in reference to two of its important petitions, which particularly appeared to influence Miss Bennett! How few make any real *sacrifice* of their substance, that their daily prayer, "Thy kingdom come," may be realised! In too many cases, the offering is one which costs them nothing. In what particular can the reader say that he or she is exercising self-denial? What luxury is dispensed

with? what comfort is laid aside, that greater assistance may be rendered to the furtherance of God's work in the world? May we not say, when we compare the amount expended in self-indulgence with that contributed to religious purposes, that the mere "dust of the balance" is scarcely cast into the treasury? Surely, such offerings must be an offence unto God. Then, is not the same indifference shewn in reference to another petition? How commonly does the Christian professor, like others, take offence when provocation is offered, and, by coldness of manner at the least, resent the injury, instead of shewing the "more excellent way" of forgiveness! How unlike the Divine Master, who "when we were yet sinners died for the ungodly!" We may rest assured that the men of the world are quick to discern the inconsistency between profession and practice; and the life, and the consequent degree of delight in the Lord, being both at fault, there is but little power to induce the unbeliever to confess that "God is in us of a truth." The effect of Miss Bennett's holiness and cheerful consistency was most marked. None could be in her company without feeling that they were with a spiritually-minded Christian, whose religion made her happy. It was evident that she spent much time with Jesus; and her presence produced a leavening influence, still fresh in the memory of all who knew her. Oh, that more of such burning and shining lights adorned our churches! May the Lord pour out His Spirit from on high, that Christians may not flicker in the socket as at present, but, in example, may "shine as lights in the world," and thus bring others to glorify their Father which is in heaven!

## CHAPTER III.

### Retirement and Death.

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“ Come to me ere I die,  
My Comfort and my Shield;  
Then, gazing on Thy cross, can I  
Calmly my spirit yield.  
When at the last,—on Thee  
My darkening eyes shall dwell;  
My faith and love shall hold Thee fast :  
Thus dying, ‘ It is well.’ ”



## CHAPTER III.

### RETIREMENT AND DEATH.

THE school was closed, but Miss Bennett's retirement from it was not a retirement from labour in the vineyard of her Lord. He, whose she was and whom she served, merely removed her into other spheres of usefulness, in which He gave her work to do and joy in doing it. Her correspondence had been for a long time very extensive, but it increased when freedom from scholastic duties afforded her greater leisure for attention to it. Being ever ready, like her Divine Example, to rejoice with those who rejoiced, and to weep with those who wept, she was always prompt with her welcome epistles of congratulation or condolence. Moreover, her former pupils and many of her friends were constantly applying to her for advice, on both temporal and spiritual subjects; and although she was most diligent with her pen, seldom allowing a day to pass without devoting a portion of it to letter-writing, it was no uncommon occurrence for her to place before her on the table a parcel of twenty or thirty unanswered letters, from which to select those next



demanding a reply. The character of the correspondence will appear from the selection which we present to our readers. Among the letters are many which were written during this later period of her life, as well as during her occupation of the school. They were valued means of instruction and comfort to the recipients, and, it is hoped, may prove words in season to some of those into whose hands this little volume may fall.

Her abode now became less stationary. At first she made Long Sutton, in Lincolnshire, her temporary home, and afterwards Whittlesey, in Cambridgeshire; from which places, it will be noticed, many of her letters were written. But her friends so universally enjoyed and felt the benefit of her society, that, had she yielded to their entreaties, she need never have called either of these places a "home." The letters, from which we have had the profitable employment of making a selection, shew how many pressing invitations from former pupils and friends she was continually refusing, simply from a conviction that it was a duty to remain wherever she might be at the time, to carry out her plans of usefulness—such as visiting the sick, or of instructing some ignorant or inquiring persons whom she had discovered within her reach. Still, she paid many visits to her friends, confirming and strengthening them, and in many ways furthering the good work to which her life was devoted. It is the common experience that a prophet has no honour amongst his own people; but in this case we find an exception, for she was instrumental in leading into the paths of righteousness some members of her own family, and helpful in establishing very many of her

numerous relatives in the love of the truth as it is in Jesus. At first her journeys were more extended, and many a pupil's home and children knew the delight of having her cheerful company; but afterwards they were, with one exception, almost limited to her relatives, and, as a friend who often entertained her remarked, "It was really a privilege to have her under one's roof, for wherever she went a blessing seemed to accompany her."

In this her eventide of life (1855) she spent six months with the writer, while he had charge of the parish of Marsh Gibbon, in Buckinghamshire. This period has frequently been looked back upon as a season of peculiar happiness and refreshment, and he can heartily appreciate the remark quoted above. It was good to have, not merely the suggestions and counsels of such an experienced servant of Christ, but also such an example of promptitude, punctuality, and earnestness in all that concerned the welfare of the people. The regularity with which she visited the sick cases, and the deep interest with which she would dwell upon the particulars of her visits upon her return,—the evident sadness with which she described indifference and ignorance, and the joy it afforded her to have discovered any symptoms of increased interest and earnestness,—shewed how truly her heart was in the work. The bad state of the roads, or the inclemency of the weather, was seldom allowed to interfere with her accomplishment of these labours of love, although her health was declining and her strength easily exhausted; and deeply were they felt by the poor people she visited to be *errands of mercy*, so tenderly did she minister to

their wants and sympathise with them in their afflictions and sorrows, and with such humility did she bring before them the truths she longed for them to know. Her perseverance also in the several duties she undertook afforded an excellent model : difficulties were energetically grappled with, and no trifle was permitted to prevent her attention to them at the appointed time. While the writer was holding the curacy of this parish, the Bishop of Oxford held a Confirmation in the district, for which Marsh Gibbon furnished several candidates. It was a great comfort to have the assistance of one, whose instructions in such seasons had been so richly blessed. The spirit of fervent prayerfulness with which she undertook the charge of the female candidates, the care with which she prepared for their instruction, and her regular retirement to her own room for communion with God before the hour of meeting, gave ground for confident expectation that this her labour would not be "in vain in the Lord." The method she had pursued with her own pupils at Melton she again adopted, and with results which filled us with thankfulness to Him who condescends to acknowledge the feeble endeavours of His servants. During the short period we remained in the parish after the Confirmation, we had the satisfaction of seeing some draw near to the Lord's Table, and, by consistency of life, strengthen our hopes that they had sincerely yielded themselves unto God, and would continue His for ever.

Residence in the same house with her not merely afforded an opportunity of seeing how brightly her lamp shone, and what a light it cast upon those within her

influence, but it disclosed the secret of its bright and pure burning,—the diligence and care with which she sought to keep it daily replenished with the oil of grace. It was her habit to rise regularly at six o'clock, for uninterrupted communion with her Father, in prayer, and the reading of His holy Word. She could adopt the words of David, "O God, thou art my God; *early* will I seek thee." Her soul seemed to shine with especial brightness when she came down stairs, direct, as it were, from Jehovah's presence-chamber; and her conversation at the breakfast-table usually turned upon some subject with which her Bible had that morning furnished her, and the relation of some new light which, during her meditation, had been thrown upon her reading. Her acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures was remarkable. Not only could she generally say where a passage quoted would be found, but could also as readily give the words upon the mention of chapter and verse. It was evidently a pleasure to "search the Scriptures," and to obtain a knowledge of anything which tended to their elucidation. In them He who is the very Word of God appeared to be more and more revealed; therein she found Him whom her soul loved; she penetrated to the inmost sweetness of God's Word, and was nourished thereby to walk in the light of His countenance. At all times her conversation was "seasoned with salt," that it might minister grace to the hearers; and the spiritual and heavenly tone of mind which it manifested, not only filled those whose privilege it was to converse with her with an humbling sense of the littleness of their own attainments in divine things, but also with

an increased conviction of the real blessedness of those "who have the Lord for their God."

At Whittlesey, by a special providence, her attention was directed to the condition of the blind, and so much was she influenced by the consideration of the spiritual profit and pleasure, which they might derive from reading for themselves the wonderful works of God, that she made herself acquainted with Moon's embossed characters, in order that she might give them instruction. Little was it imagined at the time, that this effort of benevolence was soon to be turned to account for the alleviation, in her own case, of the most distressing privation that could be inflicted. It has been remarked, that many governesses become deaf or blind from the arduous and anxious nature of their vocation. Miss Bennett's hearing became slightly impaired; and, in addition to this, in the autumn of 1859, symptoms of weakness and inflammation in one of her eyes excited much anxiety. The best advice was obtained, and active measures resorted to, but in vain. In the course of a few months, amaurosis was developed. The sight of one eye was taken, and the other became weak and almost useless. During the remainder of her life paroxysms of pain were frequent, and exclusion from the light was commonly necessary. The days of darkness now commenced; the sun of her natural life was going down; and, before dwelling in the light and bliss of heaven, her faith was to be tried greatly, as if to shew in overwhelming temptation how "the foundation of God standeth sure." As it might readily be supposed, an affliction that would remove her from most of her means of usefulness, and, in her own apprehension, bring a burden

on her friends, was not unaccompanied with occasional depression. This, however, only verified what is written, "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope:" for confidence in her unfailing Guide in the darkness, sustained her with growing hope, and her wonted cheerfulness was regained. At first it was thought that, by means of a frame often used by the blind, she might be able to continue some of her correspondence; and the prospect of still being permitted to speak a word for God to her friends at a distance, imparted pleasure to her attempts to use it; but the eyes, though not employed, were still so much affected by the effort, that it was necessarily laid aside. Under these circumstances, her range of usefulness seemed much contracted. She was in reality a prisoner, but a prisoner of hope; for, though in darkness and confinement, she was sustained by that blessed hope that enters within the veil, and borne aloft to rejoice in the contemplation of the glorious liberty which awaits the righteous. And, instead of visiting as previously, she received, like the honoured apostle in his bonds, all that came to her, and with much impressiveness edified them by her conversation. Some of them kindly became her amanuenses in these visits, and thus ministered unto her comfort, by enabling her to keep up a limited correspondence; and few were allowed to take their leave, without having read to her at least a small portion of the book which she increasingly felt to be "a light unto her path," or of some work which would supply her with food for thought. Reading by the embossed type, which she had taught others to use when she had not the slightest expectation of requiring it herself,



was also a source of consolation. She frequently remarked, how the comparatively slow reading thereby seemed to make almost every word more precious and full of meaning, than in the days when the eye could rapidly take in word after word, and sentence after sentence.

Whilst at Whittlesey, in the spring of 1860, she was attacked with intermittent fever, a kind of ague, which was followed by great prostration; and for a time some anxiety was felt for her life. But recovery was vouchsafed, and in the month of May she visited her sister at Melton. During the six weeks that she stayed there, the intercourse with her friends was of a nature quite in keeping with what proved to be her final visit. The fever returned; and serious sickness, together with the melancholy loss of the use of her eyes, tended to inspire grave reflection and aspirations after a happier future state. Much of the time of this visit was spent, in company with others, in reading the Word of God and prayer. Some of those who were privileged to share in this happy intercourse, speak most thankfully of the unction from above which was experienced, and of the comforting and sustaining grace which seemed to be poured out.

During the last few years, she had arranged to make Nuneaton partially her home. Mrs C——, with whom she resided, was an old pupil and much attached. She had become a widow in affliction; it will, therefore, be readily perceived that the “pure religion,” described by St James, caused her thus to visit the widow and her fatherless children. Besides the general scope afforded for the exercise of Christian benevolence, the delicate

health of her friend, and her earnest anxiety for the training up of her children in "the good and the right way," enforced the appeal for Miss Bennett's company and assistance.

From Melton, after this sickness, she removed to her home at Nuneaton, which was the concluding stage of her earthly pilgrimage. In this place, her final labours of love were performed; and this was the battle field on which, in all the "armour of God," she encountered "the last enemy." While strength remained, her time was much occupied by collecting contributions for the relief of the distressed ribbon-weavers, which in many cases she distributed herself, that she might speak a word of sympathy and point the sufferers to Him who is the bread of life.

In November, she commenced setting her house in order by the final arrangement of her affairs. A will had been executed by her while in better health; but now, as she fully believed that her life would soon be cut short, and wished to make a different disposal of her little worldly substance, a new one was made. When prosperous in her school, it was difficult to induce her to take advantage of her opportunity, and lay up for declining years; but the advice of one with whom she took counsel, being confirmed by the opinion of another friend, whose spirituality of mind excluded all thought of unhallowed calculations, was adopted; and, consequently, on her retirement, a small saving had been effected. Arrangements were made by which a certain annual income was secured to her, without sinking her small property in the purchase of an annuity, that, in the event of life terminating prematurely, the greater part would remain for her

testamentary disposal. We mention these particulars to shew the regard she paid to the injunctions, "Be careful for nothing," and, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Her conscience was remarkably sensitive upon the sin of heaping up riches, as implying distrust of God, and wronging the souls and bodies of others, by hiding in a napkin a talent intrusted to us for the promotion of God's glory and the good of our fellows. With the sentiment of the prophet, which she often quoted, she shrank from the defilement of lading herself with thick clay; and her remark was, that to put money in the *best* bank was her aim, in order that in the great day of reckoning she might not be condemned for wasting her Master's goods, but be received by Him into everlasting habitations, and be welcomed by those to whom she had been empowered to dispense the unrighteous mammon. In writing to her brother to obtain the legal assistance required, she gave directions for bequeathing a portion of her property to religious societies, and the remainder had an application remarkable for its judicious benevolence. The following touching extract is given from the letter:—

"My one trinket, a gold brooch with ——'s hair in it, to be given to dear ——, if she survive me; in case of her death, to ——. My Bible, to dear ——. And now, dear brother, having settled these matters, I do increasingly feel, 'to depart and be with Christ' is 'far better.' But there may be yet a deep refining process needful. 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.'—Yours in much grateful love,

"S. BENNETT.

"NUNEATON, Nov. 21, 1860."

The presentiments which prompted the foregoing letter were soon to be realised. In the month of March 1861, this beloved follower of the Lord Jesus was to pass from the Church militant to the Church triumphant. The malady, which had in a slighter degree so long tried her faith at intervals, and preached, as by the good hand of our God upon her, "This is not your rest," was now about to do its final work. Congestion of the liver appearing in a somewhat violent form, her weakened frame sunk under the attack, and on the 12th of March she was removed from the midst of loving friends, to join the host of the redeemed above.

The closing scenes are best described in the following "Recollections," written by an eye-witness:—

"Dear Miss Bennett's illness was attended with very uncomfortable feelings in the head, which she described by saying, 'I cannot think;—I feel so confused if I try to do so. Oh! what a mercy that I have been enabled to find salvation before I came to a sick bed! How could I seek it now? Still, it is not comfortable to be unable to think or pray.' It was said to her, 'But though your ability to think changes, God changes not; His eye of love is still over you.' She answered, 'Oh, yes! I feel that; it is not that I do not feel I am safe. "I know whom"—finish it for me.' I repeated the verse. She said, 'Yes, that is it; I feel that, but it is uncomfortable not to be able to feel the light of God's countenance is shining on me.' I said, 'Our dear Saviour felt the bitterness of His Father's countenance being hidden from Him; perhaps He is making you a partaker of His sufferings. "If we suffer,

we shall also reign with Him.” She said, ‘Sweet thought! “Think it not strange concerning,”—finish it.’ I did so. After a day of suffering and weakness, she asked me for a comforting text. I repeated, ‘He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver;’ adding, ‘Dear Miss Bennett, He sits beside you, He does not trust another with you, lest the furnace be too hot; and when He sees His own image clearly reflected, He will take you out.’ She said, ‘Beautiful! beautiful! He *is* beside me. Blessed Saviour, purge away my dross; make me holy, as Thou art holy; and give me grace to glorify Thee in the fires.’

“Some time after, she asked me to repeat, ‘O Zion, afflicted with wave upon wave.’ I did so. She said, ‘Who of us would not have the correction? How kind it is of God to do all this,

“To make me at length in His likeness to shine.”’

“At another time, she asked me to finish several texts which she began. I failed in the attempt. I told her, I felt very much annoyed with myself for being so stupid. She said, ‘Never mind, dear, it is perhaps to quicken your faith, and prayer for the Holy Spirit to bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever Christ has said unto you.’ She feared giving us trouble, and expressed so much gratitude for any little attention. I told her, I felt it a great privilege to wait upon her, who had done so much for me; and that I was sure mine was a work that angels might envy. She sweetly smiled, saying, ‘I am thankful for those words, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of *the least* of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”’ At another time she said, ‘How sweet to

feel myself a part of the body of Christ,—however insignificant, still a member; and as such, requisite, as it were, to Him,—a joint, and you another joint, each supplying help, according to Christ's effectual working,—referring to a conversation which she had with me before she was laid up, on Eph. iv. 15, 16. On Sunday she said, 'My dear friends must give me up, if it be God's will to take me; it is such a sweet thought, "going home."' That evening, when she tried to speak, she used words which did not express her meaning; she said, 'I feel my faculties are going; you see I cannot put my words together properly. How little I have used those faculties for God's glory; I have done so little for Him.' In a short time she said, 'I think I may apply to myself those words of Christ, in John xv., "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." He has chosen me; and it is all of grace,—His free grace; and He helped me to lead others to Christ, (you, my dear, amongst the rest,) and they in turn are leading others. Look at ——, how useful she is! Oh, what a glorious prospect! It may go on for many generations; thus the fruit shall remain to the praise and glory of God.' She said to one who sat by her bedside, 'It is a fearful and a blessed thing to die. Half-heartedness will not do; we must be altogether Christians.' She called me to her, and spoke of her two brothers, Henry and George, whom she expected. When she heard they could not reach her on Monday night, she said, 'Tell them those wonderful words in St John, "Abide in me, and I in you."' When her brother Edward inquired of her on



the Tuesday morning, 'How are you, Sarah?' she replied, 'IN PERFECT PEACE.' These were her last conscious words."

We have to remark upon her quotation of John xv. 4, that, in a letter written many years ago by the friend from whose correspondence a selection has been given in Chap. I., some thoughts upon it occur, in which the writer viewed these words as suggestive of the best wish that a dying believer can express for those from whom he is about to be separated. The sentiment must have been much cherished, as it formed the substance of the farewell message to the brothers; and to be one with Christ is indeed an all-comprehensive blessing.

"*Going home.*" This was the sweet thought given to her when announcement was made of the approach of death,—a thought which would be a precious antidote to the bitterness. On inquiring of her medical attendant what he thought would be the probable issue of her illness, she was faithfully told that expectation of her recovery could not be entertained. When he had withdrawn, *she requested to be left alone.* With the perfect love that casteth out fear, she wished for undivided communion with her God. There was no dismay, and no need of human comforters, but rather an ardent desire to depart, and to sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Upon one of her friends quietly re-entering the room, she overheard,—“O Lord, Thou knowest how long and how often I have prayed to Thee! ‘In the hour of death, good Lord, deliver me.’ Answer my prayer for the sake of Thy dear Son. Be with me now; take away

all fear of death, and enable me to glorify Thee in this time of trouble."

By grace all things were ready. The last business transaction had been effected, and, with a trembling hand, in writing scarcely legible. The evident effort this required caused the bystander to weep, which drew forth the remonstrance, "Why tears? you would not keep me back from going home?"

After declaring to her brother her enjoyment of "perfect peace," she became insensible. Her sister, Mary Ann, who arrived at noon, had only the satisfaction of watching. Once her name was called, but in vain was any intelligent utterance waited for. On the previous day her memory was failing, and her sight went entirely; and the gradual work of death was in her case, as the poet has it in the graphic soliloquy of the "Dying Christian"—

"Steals my senses, shuts my sight."

She unconsciously washed her face and attired her head, but only to lie down again and receive the final summons; yet in emblem, it might be said, of her bridal preparation. There was, for many hours before death, the restlessness which is often the forerunner of mortal slumber. This terminated with an hour of calm, at the end of which the final sigh placed her soul in the arms of angels to be borne heavenward, and presented by Him who had washed her in His own blood, and clothed her in His own righteousness, "faultless before the presence of" the Divine glory "with exceeding joy."

The following apposite lines form the last entry in her commonplace book:—

“The darkness all is left behind !  
No darkness now obscures her mind ;  
For objects lately half conceal'd,  
In full resplendence stand reveal'd.

“She feels no pain, she fears no want ;  
Her portion all that God can grant,  
To see the Saviour as He is,  
And dwell in heaven with Him and His.”

She had at Whittlesey a much-attached friend, who, upon hearing of her illness, at once went over and spent a few days in her company. They were kindred spirits, united in the most lasting of bonds ; and in Miss Bennett's sore trial of failing sight, this lady was a friend in need to minister comfort drawn from the divine well-spring. But in her last illness she appeared more independent of human channels of comfort, and Christ was more immediately her consolation. The deep waters were being left behind, and the blissful shore was near. Many a time, at the former place, had she requested her dear friend to read the 6th Psalm, as it alone expressed her sorrow and afforded relief ; but now the days of her mourning were ended, and she said that her heart no longer called for that selection.

The lady, in whose house she breathed her last, had a sister with her at the time. Both were old pupils, and had been much influenced, under the Spirit of God, by her consistent example to love the principles she inculcated, and to resolve with Ruth, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” The brother just mentioned was the only member of her own family who was permitted to have an interview with her, while she was in a state of consciousness. To the eye of sense, this was a

trying circumstance ; but He, whose providence so ordered it, doeth all things well, and it was His will that consanguinity should forego its claims. So, to the supporting arms of these two sisters in Christ, and, in some sense, children in the gospel, was consigned the care of their revered governess in her last extremity ; whilst a third sister, who had also been a pupil, and had similarly derived spiritual benefit from our departed friend, had but a few months previously fallen asleep in Jesus, and gone before, as it were, to welcome her to glory.

The remains were conveyed to Birmingham, and deposited in her brother's family vault in the Church of England Cemetery. They were borne from the chapel by six of her nephews, and, in sure and certain hope of her resurrection to eternal life, her mourning friends left them in their resting-place. At her right hand lie the remains of a beloved niece, who had been her pupil, and who, at the age of twenty-three, while away from her earthly home, was called to her heavenly inheritance. Her superior sense and good abilities, in combination with proofs of early piety, had led to more than ordinary attachment. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."

Before dispersing to their various homes, there remained one obsequy for the members of the family to unite in. Accordingly, on the morrow, the Lord's-day, they proceeded to the same house of prayer, where, with many cheering thoughts of their dear relative's entrance upon the eternal Sabbath, and of her glorious exchange of a worship consisting of prayer as well as praise in the temples of God's grace, for a worship of praise alone in

the temple of His glory, they, "with angels and arch-angels, and ALL\* the company of heaven," magnified the God of our salvation. The departed had often remarked that the Psalms, in their use in the Church service, had a peculiar capacity for adaptation to passing events, and that very frequently those for the following Sunday would be so applicable as to render their use singularly appropriate. A short time before she died, she alluded to a striking illustration of this observation. On the Sunday after the death of one of her pupils, the church at Wyfordby presented the melancholy picture of a congregation almost entirely in mourning; for the members of the school, wearing the emblems of bereavement, were seated in various parts, and formed a considerable portion of it. It was the 17th morning of the month; and as the reading of the Psalms was drawing to a close, it entered into the thoughts of one or two, that a scene so mournful almost demanded some appropriate selection of Scripture for the occasion. Scarcely had the thought been conceived, when that pathetic sentence, "My lovers and friends hast thou put away from me, and hid mine acquaintance out of my sight," supplied an expression of the grief of many hearts. The very same psalm came in course, when the mourners were assembled on the Sunday following Miss Bennett's own death.

As the life of this devoted Christian often moved the hearts of others to imitate her example, so also her death must prompt in many the wish of Balaam—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." It may be well, therefore, to dwell briefly on the

\* *Vide* Letters, Chap. I., No 25.

manner of her departure. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." We may notice how tenderly and graciously she was dealt with: she was called away to escape the irksomeness of old age, aggravated, as it probably would have been ultimately, by the entire loss of sight. The sufferings of final sickness were but of few days' duration. The king of terrors was contemplated in his near approach without dismay; she was made aware that her Shepherd was leading her "through the valley of the shadow of death;" she saw that it was a solemn thing to die, but she *felt* that it was a blessed thing to die in the Lord. In health, and at a distance, she sometimes beheld "the last enemy" clothed in terrors; but she always avowed her conviction, that in the encounter he would be disarmed by the great Captain of our salvation, who would make her peace flow as a river as she drew near to the "pure river of water of life." And this her confidence was not vain; it was more than realised; for the grasp of death was made imperceptible by sleep or torpor, and, whilst sinking into that state, it was given her to enjoy "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Surviving friends can hardly suppress a sigh as they think of their bereavement, their loss of her prayers, her counsel, and continual tokens of love. Few among them have not treasured up some of her sayings, and words of advice or consolation; and the great number of letters placed at our disposal, during the preparation of this little memorial, shews the value set upon them, and the care with which they have been preserved. One of these highly-prized relics—a letter, and some exquisite lines



which accompanied it—appears especially suitable for insertion here. It was sent to one to whom she was accustomed to write a congratulatory letter on each birthday anniversary, and was the last that was received in her own handwriting. The subject of the lines, “A Little While,” had frequently been remarked upon between them, as affording great support to the sufferer and mourner :—

“DEAR ——,—We wish you many happy returns of this anniversary! I send you, as my birth-day desire for you, Phil. i. 9-11. I would I could write more, but I dare not. Many thanks for your kind sympathising letter! With our love to all.—Yours affectionately,

“S. BENNETT.

- “Oh, for the peace which floweth as a river,  
 Making life's desert places bloom and smile!  
 Oh, for the faith to grasp heaven's bright 'for ever,'  
 Amid the shadows of earth's 'little while!'”
- “‘A little while’ for patient vigil keeping,  
 To face the stern, to wrestle with the strong;  
 ‘A little while’ to sow the seed with weeping,  
 Then bind the sheaves, and sing the harvest song.
- “‘A little while’ to wear the robe of sadness,  
 To toil, with weary steps, through miry ways,  
 Then to pour forth the fragrant oil of gladness,  
 And clasp the girdle round the robe of praise!
- “‘A little while,’ midst shadow and illusion,  
 To strive, by faith, love's mysteriës to spell,  
 Then read each dark enigma's bright solution,  
 Then hail sight's verdict, ‘He doth all things well!’”
- “‘A little while’ the earthen pitcher taking  
 To wayside brooks, from far-off fountains fed,  
 Then the cool lip its thirst for ever slaking  
 Beside the fulness of the Fountain-head!

“ ‘A little while’ to keep the oil from failing;  
 ‘A little while’ faith’s flick’ring lamp to trim,  
 And then, the Bridegroom’s coming footsteps hailing,  
 We’ll haste to meet Him with the bridal hymn.

“ And He, who is Himself the gift and Giver,  
 The future glory and the present smile,  
 With the bright promise of the glad ‘for ever,’  
 Will light the shadows of the ‘little while!’ ”

With this our narrative is concluded. It only remains for us to draw the attention of our readers to some traits of the bright character these pages have introduced, that, observing the features which imparted its loveliness, they may strive to imitate her, who made it the object of her life to become “conformed unto the image” of the Lord Jesus in affection and disposition, in conduct and conversation, and who now, through the grace which enabled her thus to live, and made her more than conqueror in death, has been found “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

It may render the work of grace more apparent, if we consider briefly the providential circumstances and the natural formation of mind and temper, with which the development was accompanied.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of parental fidelity in early training: it has a promise annexed, and happy results are sure. Where prayer, precept, consistency, and a close walk with God go in union, the children will generally give evidence of that spiritual regeneration which is amongst the holiest, as well as the most ardent, wishes of the Christian parent. The subject of this memoir, as has been stated, was bereft of her father at a very early age; and consequently, the respon-

sibility of her training and education devolved upon her mother alone. This remaining parent was an advanced Christian, who confided in God ; and receiving the tender encouragements of His Word, brought up her children as a seed to serve Him. Miss Bennett was, therefore, the child of many prayers ; and these were not idle and unfruitful, being alone, but they were accompanied with careful instruction in the truth—line upon line, and precept upon precept—enforced by that most powerful of arguments, a godly example. Thus was she early taught whose she was, and whom she ought to serve.

Many things concurred in the natural constitution of her mind that were favourable, but there were some features that formed rather a background for the more conspicuous display of the triumphs of grace. She was of an active habit, and was one of those who can scarcely live without full occupation. Her sympathies were lively, whilst her passions were happily balanced and easily controlled ; and there was a freedom from selfishness and guile. When a child, she is spoken of as being “feeling.” Energy and firmness were natural gifts. Her observation was keen, her memory prompt and retentive, and her judgment superior. With so much that is valuable in mental endowment, it would readily be supposed that when grace took full possession of the heart, the doctrine of God our Saviour would be beautifully and attractively adorned in the life. But there were some unfavourable qualities which belonged to her by nature. Her mother, in a letter referring to her in childhood, describes her as “fretful,” as well as “feeling.” She had to contend with impatience and timidity. To the majority of those who

knew her, it would appear incredible that she was naturally impatient; for Satan was, through grace, so beaten down under her feet, that it was scarcely perceptible. She wielded with constancy "the sword of the Spirit," and met this temptation with the ready rebuke of our Lord, "Get thee behind me;" and thus, in the strength of God, was successful in keeping under this hurtful frailty.

It cannot be disputed that she was in her natural disposition timid. How often does this failing incline even real Christians to shrink from confessing their Lord and their rule of life, and to turn aside from the clear path of duty! How much too rare an occurrence is it, for example, to observe the Christian faithfully rebuking vice, or courageously asserting his principles, when thrown into company where they are slighted and spoken contemptuously of! This, notwithstanding her natural timidity and diffidence, did not form a failing to mar the beauty of our loved friend's consistency and devotedness. We remember hearing of an occasion upon which she was travelling alone, when a party of men entered the carriage, who were evidently carrying on an exciting conversation. One of them, as is too commonly the case, profanely made many appeals to God for the truth of his assertions; and, with a frequency most distressing to his Christian fellow-passenger, made use of oaths in that careless manner which many plead as an extenuation of their guilt. Thoughts of the terrible manner in which he was heaping up "wrath against the day of wrath," by indulgence in this foolish practice, prompted her respectfully, but earnestly, to say, "Sir, I wish you would not swear." His hasty reply was, "Oh, you needn't hear it, if I do:"

to which her rejoinder, spoken in her most solemn and affecting manner, was, "That may be, sir, but I cannot forget that *God* hears it; and for every oath you will have to give account." The remark was not made in vain: she was spared the pain of hearing any more imprecations during the remainder of the journey. Who can tell the ultimate results of that word spoken in season? But who cannot also fully understand the temptation there is, to a timid person, to shrink from such faithful conduct? We are acquainted also with cases, in which she felt herself bound to write to some of her own family connexions upon practices which she deemed inconsistent, and upon omissions of duty which she lamented. To do this was quite contrary to the natural inclinations of her humble and unobtrusive disposition; but "the love of Christ constrained" her, even though her advice might be considered an interference, and her manifestation of real love give offence. If, then, the fear of man seldom ensnared her, the greater is the demand for praise to "the Author and Finisher of our faith," that her principles were so steadfastly asserted, and that, through grace, she triumphed also over a constitutional defect which might have greatly impeded her usefulness.

Her mind was characterised by superior understanding, rather than genius. Whilst ready for every good work, she did not exercise herself in things too high for her. Any affectation of entering into deep philosophical questions, she would shrink from. The appearance of possessing much learning had no attraction for her. Yet, it is not to be inferred that she was satirical upon those who were unlike her in this respect. In her estimation, satire

was unamiable, and, therefore, was not resorted to, except in cases where her ordinary method of kind reasoning and rebuke failed. (Prov. xxvi. 5.) Wit and pleasantry at the expense of others her Christian spirit could not tolerate; she would deplore the fact that any could do such despite to the teaching of her Lord, whose great commandment and golden rule is, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Her aversion to duplicity was very great; and it was her common remark, that a Christian ought to be "*transparent*." Slyness, cunning, artfulness, and disingenuousness, were placed in the black vocabulary; whilst the open heart, simplicity of mind, and a single eye, were insisted upon as indispensable characteristics of a healthy Christian: and those who knew her cannot fail to remember, how truly these latter qualities were displayed in her own conversation and conduct. A straightforward honesty was natural to her; and she cultivated this spirit the more, because consistency as a Christian demanded it, and it was essentially of the mind of Christ.

Unless it was clearly a duty, the repetition of an evil report never escaped her lips; and nothing distressed her more than to be compelled to listen to statements depreciatory of the character of others. This fact stands out in painful contrast to the too general practice. The evil speaker was stifled in her presence; the atmosphere was of too high an elevation for him. If remonstrance could not be adopted, he would be met with a withering silence, or some indication of grief; but more frequently he was overpowered by an energy of address upon some better subject, which at once turned the current of the conversation.



Again, it will be remembered by her friends how frequently she urged the Christian duty of forgiveness of injuries, and how she reiterated the admonition of St Paul, "Why do ye not rather take wrong?" (1 Cor. vi. 7;) and we cannot call to mind a single instance in which she violated this principle, so foreign to her had revenge become, and so thoroughly had she subdued its fiery action.

Some may ask, How did she acquire her enviable superiority to provocation? She was not born with extraordinary meekness; her natural disposition was to the contrary. What was the secret of her possessing so much of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ?" Obviously, her high attainments in religion alone account for it. She walked closely with God. As the heliotrope turns towards the sun, so was her heart ever towards "the Sun of Righteousness;" and, dwelling in the light of His countenance, she reflected His likeness who "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself." But sanctification is a progressive work, and it is not to be supposed that she was thus subdued to the Spirit without much previous discipline. Experience had taught her both the difficulty and the necessity of putting away "all anger and malice." It was a point on which she most earnestly insisted, often dwelling on the words of St James, "How great a matter a little fire kindleth!" and speaking of the disgrace brought upon a Christian profession by unchecked anger or an unforgiving spirit. She felt how the enemy of souls would take advantage of such falls; and, therefore, when occasion rendered it necessary for her to bring the subject before those of her acquaintance, whom she believed to require advice on this point, she always pre-

scribed the one remedy which she herself had ever found efficacious—immediate resort to God in prayer. Upon experiencing any injury or provocation, it was her practice at once to take the offender before the throne of grace, and there to pray for him in the spirit of that beautiful petition in our Litany, “That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts.” By this means she found herself preserved from a spirit of unkindness, and her enemy won.

It may have been a subject of surprise with some of our readers, that Miss Bennett was able to get through so much business, and find time for the accomplishment of so much good. In a great measure this may be accounted for from the determination with which she followed the inspired counsel, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.” She knew well the canker, and felt the sin of procrastination; therefore, while her ready memory suggested the work, her hand at once performed it; thus accumulations and omissions of duty being avoided, straight paths were made for her feet, and her mind was left unencumbered. The advantage of this can scarcely be overrated; for promptness, as a rule, not only greatly enhances the value of the service, but also secures to the individual comfort, to which the procrastinator is a stranger. Her good offices were readily granted, and quickly performed. There was no difficulty of approach, no need of plying with arguments, and no fear lest there should be unnecessary delay; if the object were good, and its accomplishment practicable, it was felt that compliance and execution might be looked upon as obtained. Those who take an active part in promoting works of piety or

charity, know the value to be set upon such a willing helper as this, and feel how the difficulty with which assistance is extracted from some, gives lustre to the contrasting excellence of a ready mind.

Of Miss Bennett's cheerfulness we spoke particularly in the conclusion of Chapter II. The ever-flowing fountain of her joy, we saw, was Christ, who said, "My joy no man taketh from you." But in this *résumé* of her character, mention of it must not be omitted; although, as we there fully described its true source, we have now only one particular to add. She viewed it as a rule in the order of things, that the greatest amount of enjoyment accrued to those who strove most to promote the happiness of others; and this she acted upon. It is pleasing to call to mind, how, continually influenced by this sentiment, her devoted service, and manner of address even, attested that her life was one effort to make all she met with happy. For all there was the sparkling eye and fervent, though gentle, greeting; and her whole life was so thickly studded with acts of kindness and consideration, that none of her friends, companions in labour, pupils, and servants, can fail to remember proofs, which they were continually receiving, in little things, of her desire to give them pleasure.

It is recorded of Wesley, that upon being asked whether he did not, in common with others, entertain a very high opinion of an individual who was mentioned, he tritely answered, "I have not lived with him." There was much wisdom in this cautious reply; for, as St Paul assures the Corinthians, (1 Cor. xiii. 1-3,) there may be "the tongues of angels," the greatest "knowledge," the utmost liberality

and personal sacrifice, but still the essentials of a Christian spirit be wanting. The writer, however, had the privilege of residing with her whose character we have endeavoured to delineate; and the daily observation of her life in the privacy of a home, not merely confirmed him in his high estimation of a beloved aunt, but more than corroborated the testimonies of all who spoke her praises. Since her decease numerous letters have been received from others, who lived with her in similar intimacy, the substance of which might be stated in the inspired description of Zacharias and Elisabeth,—she was “righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”\* Among them is a letter from one of her partners in the school, which contains, besides her own opinion, an illustration of the impression her private life produced upon the minds of her pupils. For this reason we give an extract from it.

This lady writes:—“I remember — saying to me one day, ‘Miss A——, don’t you think Miss Bennett perfect?’ I replied, I thought my dear friend one of the brightest specimens of Christian character I knew; but that I was well aware she deplored many heart sins, known only to herself and God; and that there had been only One perfect.” Far be it from us to hold forth any pretensions to perfection: our object is simply *to magnify the grace of God* which abounded in her, and rendered her such a bright example of the loveliness and preciousness of true religion; that others may seek to be partakers of the same grace, and in the end inherit the same glory.

\* Luke i. 6.

The effect of seriously and prayerfully contemplating the lives of eminent servants of God, is a desire to walk as they walked, and to follow "them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." It is our earnest wish to excite such desires; but we know that it is possible to dwell upon high attainments till the effect be despondency, instead of imitation. We would, therefore, remind any desponding but earnest reader, that all have not the same gifts; constitution of the mind and providential circumstances vary; and the results in Christian obedience shew a corresponding variety. In the case before us, besides every advantage of a pious education, there was so much that was favourable to begin with,—untiring industry, mental energy, self-control, inborn sincerity, true humility, an affectionate disposition, prepossessing address, a strong, but by no means a morbid, sympathy for others, and in every respect a healthy tone of mind, with a capacity admirably adapted to her station. These gifts, then, it should be considered, being sanctified for employment by the Spirit of God, it is no wonder that the lustre of a useful and godly life was more than ordinarily conspicuous. But let not such as find their natural failings greater, and their advantages less, regard them as a certain bar to their rendering unto God acceptable service. God accepteth "according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not:" and we stand at Jesus' judgment-seat, be it remembered, where righteous judgment will be dispensed. It will be well, therefore, jealously to examine ourselves, and to raise the question, whether it be not outward manifestation before men, rather than depth of principle in the

heart, that the mind is set upon, when it is panting after great things, and is inclined to murmur, because there is assigned to us only a humble place in the scale of Christian example and usefulness. When the Lord comes, He will make manifest the secrets of the heart, "and then shall every man have praise of God;" and, doubtless, many that are first in man's estimation will be last, and the last first. If, however, the hearts of any have warmed with the love of Christ, whilst His likeness, as reflected in one of His people, has been here portrayed, let them not despair. Let them come to the feet of Jesus in deep humility, looking to Him alone for acceptance with God and for strength to live as His: and, although to human appearance they be not privileged disciples, leaning on Jesus' breast, and although they think themselves less than the least of all saints, their great High Priest bears their names upon His breast-plate; and, in the glorious assembly of the Church triumphant, will assuredly acknowledge them as His before His Father and the holy angels. Let them remember, in their despondency, that although for some wise reason they may not have been permitted to see the results of their feeble endeavours to glorify God, He is not unrighteous to forget their "works and labour that proceedeth of love;" and will declare that they were not "barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Some men's works are manifest beforehand, and some they follow after."

And if, as we have contemplated the life and character of our "Christian Governess," clad in the graces of the Spirit, and all-fragrant with "the imitation of Christ," we



have been filled with a desire to be like her, that we might “glorify God;”—let us remember that the same Spirit which wrought so powerfully in her, can accomplish the same things in us who are in the world, and that He is distinctly promised to all who ask, (Luke xi. 13.) Let us walk as she walked, closely with our God, continuing instant in prayer, taking the Word of God as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path; making it the grand object of life to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;” then shall our path be “as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

## LETTERS.

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“The plastic hand hath its witness in a statue, and exactitude of vision  
in a picture ;  
And so, the mind that was among us, in its writings is embalmed.”



THE mind of the individual, whose memoir we have given, will be further illustrated by her letters ; we therefore add a selection, first from such as are upon various subjects, and in the next chapter from those which are more exclusively on consolation to the afflicted. We are not able to place them in chronological order, as the year is generally omitted in her dating. This circumstance corroborates what we ought to mention, that the writer of them was of too humble a mind to suppose that they would be treasured up in series ; and nothing was further from her than to think that they would be required for publication.

Most of them were written with liability to interruption in the pressure of the constant demands of a busy life ; and none, probably, with elaborate effort. On this account there is but little room for criticism ; yet they may be thought more valuable as the genuine effusion of a refined and Christian mind. Want of space, as well as other considerations, has made abridgment necessary in most of them.

Names are withheld for obvious reasons.



## CHAPTER I.

“ A word spoken in due season, how good is it ! ”—PROV. xv. 23.

WE commence with a valuable letter, addressed to the author on a birthday anniversary, immediately after obtaining a title to Holy Orders :—

### I.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR GEORGE,—I rejoice with you that your way is made so clear, and that the sphere of your future labour appears to be now distinctly marked out. May you go to it “ strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,” “ determined to know nothing but Christ, and Him crucified.” This will be an especially interesting birthday to you, for it finds you appointed to become a Minister of Christ ; and ere this year closes, (if the Lord will,) I trust you may have testified to many of His “ great salvation.” Truly may we rejoice with trembling, when we think of the work, the infinite importance of the message intrusted to you, the danger of doing the work of the Lord negligently, and the many snares that will beset your path from the world, the flesh, and the devil. To be placed, as it were, in the forefront of the battle, to be surrounded by so many witnesses, and to be one of the “ light-bearers” to a world lying in darkness ;—well may we ask, “ Who is sufficient



impart of the blessed truths to others. I have felt lately a more anxious desire for the sealing of the Spirit, such a sense of adoption as tends to a more rejoicing state of mind; not only to be able to say, "I know in whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day," but to rejoice in the confidence, without any lurking unbelieving doubt, that "my beloved is mine and I am His." It has also occurred to me that, whilst we earnestly seek for the grace of the Holy Spirit to renew our hearts day by day, we do not thankfully acknowledge the grace we have received; we feel almost afraid of doing it; yet the grace is not ours, but God's, and for every desire which He has put into our hearts to love and serve Him, we should gratefully thank Him; then we shall find He will give "more grace." Another thing I am aiming after, but am very far, alas! from having attained to, is, to carry on my daily employments in a spirit of prayer. I feel how this would sanctify all I do; and what a blessing it would bring on all my labours. It surely was so in days past. At our morning Scripture-reading at school, I often felt my heart drawn out in prayer for you all there, and I have reason to believe those readings were blessed to the souls of many. I dare say you feel with me it is easier far to pray when engaged in works decidedly of a spiritual nature like the above, but the difficulty lies in the every-day, common things of life. My leisure hours I spend in working for religious societies: how I feel, that could I have my thoughts rising upwards when so engaged, these societies might be far more helped by prayer—imperfect indeed,—yet in the hands of our great Intercessor, it surely would bring an answer of blessing. I hope, dear ——, you have laid up many a prayer for your precious little one, whilst working for her or engaged with her. Sow plentifully, and she will reap abundantly; for "faithful is He who hath promised." I hope you are still able to prosecute in some measure your labours among the poor. Our Lord knows what we can do, and He is not a hard

master, as Satan would fain represent Him, but sees the willing mind, and gives grace and strength equal to the day. Truly His service is perfect freedom. It is the beginning here of what Bridges beautifully describes as heaven—"a service of love to a God of love throughout eternity." A cottage-reading once a week, or fortnightly, would lighten your labours by bringing the four or five together whom you might otherwise have to visit separately. The report of Larne school, received this morning, is very satisfactory.

Are you and your dear husband much and earnest in prayer for a revival? How little noticed is that true and faithful promise in Matt. xviii. : "I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Try Him, dear ——; He is the Truth; wait for the answer; look for it; and though it tarry, wait, it shall come in due time; for all the promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus.—Yours, &c.

## IV. TO THE SAME.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ——,—I know not with what more suitable words to begin this year's correspondence with you, than the cheering exhortation of the apostle,—“Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” You are called to a self-denying work in your district, but let the assurance, “My word shall not return unto me void,” encourage you to sow beside all waters; sowing in faith and prayer, you will assuredly reap an abundant harvest. And here I may mention from my own experience, that when, during my visit to any one, whilst seeking to impart instruction, I have by grace been enabled to lift up my heart in prayer, an answer has been given, in quickened attention or in more abiding consequences. So, I doubt not, God mani-

fested Himself to be a God hearing and answering prayer, in our morning Scripture-reading at school, the savour of which still remains in the hearts of some of my dear pupils. I feel this also at W——, in my weekly visits to a poor blind man; and I have reason to hope God has graciously awakened in that man's heart at least some anxious desires about his soul; yea, more than this I venture to look for, but wait in hope for the fuller manifestation of the grace of God.

Thus, dear ——, I desire to encourage you, by telling of God's goodness, His wondrous grace in using me as an instrument of good to others. (1 Cor. i. 27-29.)

How much mercy and wisdom is manifested in the believer being called to work for God! How infinite the condescension, which invites us to be fellow-workers with Him! Have not these services of love a tendency to uproot the selfishness of the human heart, so prone to consider its own comfort, convenience, &c.? Are we not taught by these exercises of Christian duty and self-denial, that it is "more blessed to give than to receive?"—the touching and only aphorism of our Lord; and do we not thus learn what the apostle meant when he said, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others?" Truly, amidst all his trials, the Christian alone leads a happy life—feeling that the service of the Lord is perfect freedom, that His yoke is easy, and His burden light.—Yours, &c.

#### V. TO THE SAME.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ——,— How much Miss —— will enjoy being with you. May you have some sweet communion together! (Mal. iii. 16, 17.) Does not the world appear to you to walk in a vain shadow? The conversation of those who know not God is so unsatisfactory; and it is very difficult, though the imperative duty of a Christian, to

endeavour to give it a profitable turn. (I condemn myself whilst I thus write.) I believe if I were a more faithful witness for Christ, I should find the old enmity yet remaineth. We should set little value on a kindly feeling toward us on the part of the world; yea, it should cause deep heart-searchings as to whether it does not arise from a want of faithfulness to the Lord who bought us, and turning aside from Him, who, speaking of the world, said, "Me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil." How circumspectly a Christian ought to walk! I remember our good minister at A——, when speaking on the subject, said, "The Christian should consider that he was the world's Bible; it would read no other, and often formed its opinions of its truths by the lives of those who professed to study it." . . .

Be much in prayer for your minister. It has occurred to me that it might, in certain cases, be a profitable exercise, calculated in some measure to supply the sad want of a faithfully-preached gospel, to take the text preached upon as the subject of our meditation and conversation, and to seek by prayer, and comparing scripture with scripture, to draw from it that food for our souls which we found not in the usual channel. . . . Yours, &c.

VI. TO ——, ESQ., WHO HAD LENT HER SIR J. STEPHENS'S  
"ESSAYS IN ECCLESIASTICAL BIOGRAPHY."

DEAR SIR,—I have found the book you so kindly lent me deeply interesting; still, as I read, I did not feel satisfied with the religious principles taught by the reviewer, and sanctioned, I conclude, by the editor; for if, as he says, the glances at those sacred topics are only "furtive and timid," yet are they sufficiently prominent to shew themselves defective in the great truth, "that man cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God." No wonder, then, that with such glancing at, or rather

attempting to draw a veil over, the effectual enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit, as in page 56, the editor should fall into the unsound doctrine as in the Epilogue, page 49, &c. Thinking it probable you may not have read so far through the book, I venture to call your attention to it. Could this method of softening down the "terrors of the Lord" be admitted, where would be the foundation of our hopes? The Divinity of our Lord, which renders His great atonement "a full, sufficient, and perfect sacrifice," on which our souls may safely rest, might in like manner be undermined, and also every other Christian truth.

The remark as to Dan. xii. 2 is not correct. (See Isaiah xxxiii. 14, and lxvi. 24.) These texts throw a fearful gleam upon the nature of that "day of wrath" spoken of in Job. xxi. 30, and upon the destruction frequently threatened to the wicked, (Ps. ix. 17.) Still, as Nicholls observes in his "Help to Reading the Bible," "while traces of the punishment awaiting the wicked are discernible from the beginning, yet it is to the gospel, to the declarations of our blessed Lord and His apostles, that we must turn for the full disclosure of that wrath, tribulation, and anguish, which shall be the eternal portion of the finally impenitent." I am no critic, as you will easily perceive, but I have ventured to draw your attention to the subtle poison wrapped up with much humility in the Epilogue, which I conceive to be full of danger to the youthful reader, or to any one of unfixed principles. I hope you will not punish my presumption by refusing to lend me any more books, for I am a great gainer by your kindness, and very gratefully do I appreciate it.—Believe me, dear sir, yours, &c.

#### VII. TO ANOTHER PUPIL.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ———,—I was very glad to hear that you were so comfortable, and I hope you still remain so. Trials of



one kind or another you must expect, for there will be a "crook in the lot," and there is a "needs-be" for the thorn in the nest, or we should quite forget that we are only travellers on that little parenthesis of time between two eternities. How prone we are to forget this now, and inwardly, and almost secretly, to indulge the hope that although men are generally born to trouble, we may prove one of the happy exceptions, till the sharp hour of sorrow comes, and we find that it was but a vain hope. Doubtless, He who chooses our lot in life sees that such is the waywardness of our hearts, such our proneness to cleave to earth, that thus it must be. Did you ever meet with an anecdote of Mr Cecil with reference to this subject? It is this:—"Under great conflict of mind, Mr Cecil went one day to walk in the college garden, where he saw a very fine pomegranate tree cut almost through the stem, near to the root. On asking the gardener why this was done, he was told—'Sir, this tree used to shoot so strong that it bore nothing but leaves; I was obliged to cut it in this manner, and when it was cut almost through, then it began to bear plenty of fruit.'" Dear ——, you have been cut through near to the root; your heart has been deeply wounded; and now, may not He who permitted this trial be anxiously looking for plenty of fruit? Do you inquire what fruit? A "ceasing from man," not in a morbid feeling of disappointment, but in the consciousness that he is too weak to bear your unlimited confidence and hopes of happiness; a cleaving to God as your reconciled Father in Christ Jesus; a yielding your heart to Him who changes not; a looking to Him as the only source of peace and comfort; a living upon Him for all your need, drawing wisdom and strength from Him for the daily duties of life, (see James i. 5;) a casting all your care upon Him, feeling assured He careth for you; and the habit of going to His throne of grace under all troubles and anxieties, knowing that He invites you so to do. (Ps. l. 16). . . .

It is an error that young Christians are apt to fall into,

as well as the worldly, to expect too much from professing people, forgetting that even in the regenerate, sin is ever striving for the mastery, and would prevail were it not for upholding, preventing grace. We should remember that we also are ready to fall. "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe," should be our cry when we see others stumble. In our intercourse with one another we must consider that the various characters and dispositions we meet with form a part of our probation, and give us the opportunity (not to be found in heaven where perfection reigns) for exercising the Christian graces of forbearance, meekness, patience, and forgiveness of injuries; which graces, though coming from above, are yet only to be called into exercise on earth. . . .

The duty of a Christian instructress is to watch the very buddings of evil in the unkind look or word, and so seek to check it; especially to lead the young ones to feel their own proneness to evil, and to pray daily, as David did, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." These remarks I have ventured to make, hoping they may prove a word in season; for, as has been already observed, "it is a great thing to teach a teacher;" but, as that teacher was once a pupil of my own, duty and interest unite with the pleasure, and make it a privilege if in any way I be permitted to strengthen your hands, or suggest a word of advice.—Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

#### VIII. TO THE SAME.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ——,—From all that you say, I am led to indulge the hope that you have, like Mary, chosen the good part, which shall never be taken from you. And what was the distinguishing mark in Mary's character? It was intense love to her Lord. Having been taught by the Spirit her need of salvation, and been led by the same inward teaching to sit at the feet of her Saviour, she



drank in largely His gracious instructions, and her soul was nourished thereby. This is the secret of all real growth in grace—to live near to Christ, to receive Him as our Prophet to instruct, our King to rule over us, and as our great High Priest who offered Himself for us, and who “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” “Abide in me,”—as the branches in the vine, drawing sap and nourishment from the root,—as Noah in the ark, safe amidst a dying world,—as a stone in the spiritual building of which Christ is the foundation, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. Blessed, thrice blessed, are they who yield their hearts to God, and by His grace are enabled to devote the morning of their days to Him. Truly do they find His service perfect freedom, His ways ways of pleasantness, and all His paths peace—peace here, where all besides is restless—peace hereafter, in that world of peace where He dwells who is “the Prince of Peace.” Do you know this hymn? The desire therein expressed is one that has a promise annexed to it, that they who seek shall find. [Here is quoted the well-known hymn, beginning, “Beset with snares on every hand.”] Here, you observe, our state is spoken of as one “beset with snares,” and this reminds me of the word of caution my own experience dictates to my young friend. Let not the active duties of a religious life draw you from the inner life of the soul, which is only to be kept up by continually drawing fresh supplies of grace from Christ. Private prayer, reading the Word, and meditation upon that Word, can never be neglected with safety. Jesus, our great Example, vouchsafed in this also to shew us what to do. Even when hindered by the multitude from the quiet retreat which He sought, and when engaged the whole day in teaching and healing them, we find that, rather than forego the sweet communion that He loved, He spent whole nights in prayer. We are not called upon to do this, but so to order our time that one duty may not intrench upon another, and that private intercourse with God may refresh us

and fit us for active employment, and that active employment may render more sweet, rest with our God. "They made me keeper of the vineyard, but my own vineyard have I not kept." Let not this be our lamentation, but rather may it be our happy experience to be enabled by grace to draw refreshing water from the river of life, and then watering others, to be again watered. Thus doubly blessed, happy are they "who have the Lord for their God." . . .—Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

The following letter to another pupil, of whom she had not heard for many years, shews the deep interest she continued to feel in those who had been long removed from her care, and also affords an example of the persuasive style in which she brought before them the importance of eternal things:—

## IX.

HINCKLEY.

DEAR MISS ——,—Some years have passed since we met. I well remember how much I felt encouraged to hope, when you were with me, that you desired to give the morning of your life to God. Has that hope, my dear young friend, been realised? There is no standing still in this matter; we must be either going forward or backward—nearer to God or farther from Him. When time, swifter than the weaver's shuttle, is bringing us continually nearer and nearer to an eternal world, ought we not to consider our ways? Is it not an important question—Where am I going? Should not the inquiry of our hearts be—Am I living for eternity? And this question becomes the more important, when death is among us in a form which scarcely leaves time for consideration. Does not the fearful cholera render more deeply impressive our Lord's gracious admonition, "Be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the

Son of Man cometh?" But why should any one hesitate in the choice between life and death, happiness and misery, holiness and sin, God and Satan? Christ gives to all who come to Him as penitent sinners, renouncing every other hope, eternal life. He imparts unto them a secret peace amidst all the trials of the way, and the cheering hope of the full enjoyment of heaven's blessedness. In the path of holiness grow all the sweetest flowers that can cheer the soul in this wilderness world, and God himself is the present and everlasting portion of His people; whilst the wages Satan gives to his miserable slaves is death—eternal death, and much wretchedness of heart amidst the world's best joys. Believe it, dear young friend, the nearer we live to God the happier we shall be. There is a sweet peace, of which those who have enjoyed it can testify, in drawing near to God as our reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, and in walking with Him, cheered by His love, upheld by His strength, and guided by Him in all our ways. Thus shall we be enabled to meet the various trials of life, which sooner or later we must experience, and find they are but light and short, contrasted with the "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," the purchase of a Redeemer's love, and given to all who by His grace yield their hearts to Him. Write and tell me what you think of these things. I earnestly desire and hope to meet many of my dear young friends at the right hand of God, and would say to all, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."—Believe me, dear —, yours, &c.

The letters which we next insert were addressed to an old pupil, and will be read with deep interest, because they manifest the maternal anxiety with which she sought to promote her growth in grace. The cautions, advice, and encouragement so lovingly given may prove words in season to some whose path may be beset with difficulties,

or whose souls may be disquieted by fresh discoveries of weakness, or by a lengthened period of spiritual darkness:—

## X.

MELTON.

DEAR ———,—I feel it both a duty and a pleasure to try to say a word in season to those who are willing to receive it. It is satisfactory to my mind that you do feel the important task now devolving upon you—that of training up children committed to your care in the way they should go. You will daily learn experimentally that of yourself you can do nothing; but the sense of that need not by any means discourage you, for help is laid upon One that is mighty, and wisdom is promised to those who ask for it. (James i. 5.) I think you will find kindness, united with firmness, the most effectual means of controlling the wayward tempers of your little pupils. Never let them see you out of temper, (what need of prayer!) however trying they may be. Children are quick to see when reproof is given with irritated feelings, and, as one observes, “such reproof is like medicine given scalding hot.” Enter upon the work of each day in a prayerful spirit. When your children are naughty, lift up your heart in prayer to Him who can subdue the evil, and then use mild reproof, or, if necessary, punishment. If you feel yourself excited, wait a moment, but wait that moment on the Lord for fresh strength, and it will be given you, and so shall your work prosper. “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

. . . . Dread the least approach of error; try all by the light of God’s Word; pray earnestly for a right judgment in all things, and fear anything which might lead you to trust to the shadow—outward observances—and so forget the substance, Jesus Christ, “the Lord our Righteousness.” These remarks, my dear young friend, may not be wholly useless in your walk through this world of danger, where snares are laid by the great enemy of souls

on every hand. Let your prayer be, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." Trust not in man, but lean on God alone. Remember your Lord's gracious counsel, "Abide in me." Write to me soon again, and believe me, dear —, yours, &c.

## XL. TO THE SAME.

MELTON.

DEAR —,—I suppose you may have been spending the Christmas vacation with your parents, and that you are now, like myself, busily engaged in the duties of our interesting, yet arduous, undertaking. You seem almost afraid of speaking of the inward satisfaction you feel in the diligent discharge of the duties devolving upon you, yet you may enjoy it, whilst in all humility of heart you can also say with the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give the praise;" for without Him we can do nothing. Neither should a sense of your manifold shortcomings cast you down, for our God is not, as Satan would have us think, a hard master. He delights in the sincere, though imperfect, efforts of His children to do His will. It is written for our comfort, that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." An affectionate little child may try to lift a footstool too heavy for him, to bring it to his parent, hoping thereby to please him; and though he cannot do it of himself, will not the father smile and accept the will for the deed? And is not our heavenly Father infinitely more tender and kind? Whilst, under the law, the burnt-offerings, the types of the sacrifice of Christ, were to be perfect, the freewill-offering, the types of our services, would be accepted although imperfect. (See Lev. xxii. 23). Of course, this has no reference to the slothful servant; but they are words of comfort to those who do indeed devote themselves, body, soul, and spirit, to the Lord. The difficulty you feel in prayer is one in which every child of God, more or less, can sym-

pathise with you. The closet has been aptly described by one, as "the battle-field of the Christian." We would fain draw near to God, but the world, the flesh, and the devil too often come between us and our heavenly Father, and rob us of the high privilege of communion. Well may we say, "We are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us." Yet we must not faint or be discouraged. Let us seek earnestly a more fervent spirit. Ejaculatory prayer has a happy tendency to keep the mind in a more prepared state for the hour of prayer. Of this kind of prayer Nehemiah's is a fine example. It is well also, before we kneel down, to consider what we especially need,—what mercies we have to acknowledge, what sins to pray against, what helps in duty to ask for. And then also we must watch as well as pray; we must look for an answer; it *will* come in the way best for us. I believe we lose many a sweet experience, and much strengthening of our faith, by not watching for the answer.

I think your plan with the children is good. I prefer Mr Carr's tracts, because of the selection of the texts on different Christian doctrines, by which the great truths of our religion may be more regularly taught than by detached texts here and there; and one text at a time need only be learned; for, as you know, I have always carefully sought to avoid making religion irksome, and therefore cannot but agree with you on that point. . . . Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

## XII. TO THE SAME.

HINCKLEY.

DEAR ——,—I hasten to reply to yours, because I would offer a word of encouragement drawn from past experience. You justly observe, that you can hardly hope to meet with such kindness as you have enjoyed, yet you may; however, it is well to expect difficulties and trials in a world like this, that we may not be cast down by them



“as though some strange thing happened to us,” but rather consider them as thorns planted in our nest by a Father’s wise and tender care, who would have us rise above the world and its cares to the glad anticipations of enduring happiness and peace—the portion of all who know a Saviour’s love. All the changes we meet with here, the rough and the smooth, are but the needful discipline to fit and prepare us for heaven’s unchanging rest. The different characters of those we meet with form our probation, and present a field for the exercise of mutual forbearance. We must not stumble, though we meet with inconsistencies in the children of God. We should rather consider ourselves, lest we be also tempted. Whilst in this world, every Christian has to contend against spiritual enemies, and should we see, or think we see, our brethren overcome, we should help them by our prayers, if we may not by our counsel. When you feel the want of some little kind attention which your heart needed, then look upwards to your sympathising Friend. May He not have permitted you to feel this want that you might thereby be drawn nearer to Himself? When duties press too hard upon you, by prayer draw strength from this ever-present Friend. Accustom yourself to feel Him ever near, to realise His presence, and cheer yourself in His love. Often when we tell our griefs to earthly friends, the relief afforded is transitory, and the heart is ready to feel angry with those who have grieved us; but when we pour out our sorrows into the compassionate ear of our gracious Lord, peace is given, and love both to God and man flows into our minds. You had great difficulties to contend with when first you entered Mr ——’s family, but they passed away; so may those you now meet with, or they shall be overruled for your good. I can look back through all my governess life now, and mark how one situation prepared me for another, and how all the trials and vexations I met with were overruled for *my* good. And so, I fully believe, it will be in your case; indeed, the more you know of the situation

and its privileges, as well as its duties, the more comfortable you will feel in it.—Yours, &c.

## XIII. TO THE SAME.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR ——,—I feel I must write to bid you be of good courage. “The Lord will provide.” Wait patiently for Him in the diligent, prayerful use of means; and in due time the right place shall be given you, and the work which He wills you to do. But the question arises, Has she not work to do now? Assuredly; and the affectionate, dutiful daughter will be at no loss to find out what that is; nay, more, the Christian child will seek by a careful conversation, by watching every opportunity, as well as by secret ejaculatory and private prayer, to forward the salvation of those so dear to her, in making known to them the Saviour of sinners, the Friend of the weary, the only sure Refuge in a world of trial and disappointment. And for yourself, dear ——, see a Father’s hand in all that concerns you. View all His dealings with you as a part of that discipline by which He is training you for your heavenly inheritance. Doubtless it has often been your prayer, “Lord, increase my faith.” By thus calling it into exercise, He is answering your prayer; for first, He shews you how weak it is; and then, by His Word and Spirit, He directs you to the fulness that is in Jesus to supply all your need.

Is it not of His grace that you are enabled cheerfully to bear the disappointment in losing Mrs ——’s situation, by the consideration that the lady who has procured it was an orphan and much needed it, thus exemplifying the apostolic precept, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others?” Were this precept universally practised, what a happy world ours would be in comparison to what it now is! *Now* it is, dear ——, that tribulation will, by the grace of God, work in you *patience*,—a patient waiting upon

God ; *experience*,—sweet and precious, of His sustaining love ; *hope*,—a *good* hope, according to Rom. viii. 28,—a hope that maketh not ashamed,—for who ever trusted in Him and was ashamed ? And all these graces springing from “ the love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit ! ” Well, then, may you rejoice in this trial, and say,

“ In me fulfil thy pleasure, Lord ;  
Thy will be done, Thy name adored.”

I shall be glad to hear that the cloud is passing over, leaving all these blessings behind ; and I hope you will not fail to give me an early intimation of your meeting with a suitable situation.—Yours, &c.

## XIV. TO THE SAME.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR —,—I am anxious to know how it is with you now,—whether the cloud that threw its shade over your bright prospects has passed away, and whether you are now quietly and comfortably carrying on the work to which you have been called, daily going to the Saviour to draw out of His fulness grace and strength according to your need.

How kindly did our heavenly Father permit your late trials, as if to prevent you from settling down on earth. Did they not seem to say, “ Arise, depart, for this is not your rest ? ” Did they not bid you seek more earnestly to have your affections and desires fixed on things above ? The work assigned to you, in the providence of God, is a very important one. The wider the extent of influence your dear pupils are likely to have, the more desirable it is that that influence should be all on the side of God. Early impressions are very abiding, and faithful instructions, given in a spirit of earnest prayer, will be like seed cast upon the waters, productive of fruit after many days. It is not so much by pointing out the evils of the pomps and vanities of this vain world, as by shewing the *happiness* of true religion, the *blessedness* of serving God, that

the hearts of the young may, by His grace, be brought to seek the Lord. Teach them the love, the compassion, the tender mercy of the Saviour ; point out the loveliness, the goodness, the holiness of Jesus ; tell of His unwearied labours, His meekness, patience, and long-suffering ; and may the Great Teacher so water with His blessing the seed sown, that it may spring up and bring forth much fruit to the glory of God.—Yours, &c.

## XV. TO THE SAME.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ——,—Truly your situation *is* a very dangerous one, and you have need to “watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation,” for though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. I would venture to take these words in a sense different from their original meaning. God has in infinite mercy made your spirit willing in the day of His power, and given you an earnest desire to serve Him “with a perfect heart and a willing mind ;” but the flesh, the sin that dwelleth in you, still struggles for the mastery, and Satan is seeking through it to ensnare you ; therefore, it is your safety to look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith, and to cry earnestly to Him in every hour of need. The “praying always with all prayer and supplication” should be your strength in the hour of temptation, by drawing strength from Him that is mighty ; and *this* you can do, as Nehemiah did (Neh. ii. 4) when surrounded by the worldly. Knowing by sad experience how prone we are to go astray, I fear for you ; though I am thankful that you appear in some measure alive to the snares around you. Dear ——, are we not, as old Gurnall observes, “like a spark kept alive on the ocean ?—a wine-glass without a foot, which if left to itself must needs fall ?—or as a stone rolling down a hill, requiring some contrary force to roll it up ?” Truly has Jesus said, “Without me ye can do nothing ;” and infinite love, wisdom, and tenderness are manifested in the admonition, “Abide in me.” . . . .

Then follows some advice upon a point on which her young correspondent felt a difficulty ; and she thus proceeds :—

As a witness for Christ, you are called upon to let your light so shine before men, that they may profit by it, and your quiet withdrawing from their Sabbath desecrations might bring silent conviction to some heart. Decision of character and consistency of conduct are essential to the Christian for his glorifying God, and in the end save him from many snares and difficulties. Do you know, old as I am, I yet feel popularity to be injurious? I have lately found pride, selfishness, and a secret repining, working in my heart, brought into exercise by some crosses my gracious Lord has called me to bear ; impatience too, which I thought subdued, has broken out, and terrified me, lest even now I should disgrace my Christian profession ; and all this evil I trace to the *expressed* kind commendation of friends as to my letters, labours among the poor, &c. Yet at the time my heart disavowed the praise ; it could, and still does, say, ‘It is not in *me* ; it is *God alone* who graciously uses me to minister instruction or comfort to others.’ Nevertheless, the poison has worked secretly in my heart, and revived these roots of bitterness. It was a valuable remark made by our minister not long since, that ‘when we see the weeds in our garden, we know there are roots to be pulled up ;’ so, when some sin breaks forth in action, we may be sure ‘there is a root working within.’ So you see, if one who has long travelled the narrow way (though in much imperfection) is so prone to slip into some of the quicksands or pitfalls of which old Bunyan speaks, have you not need, dear, to lean hard upon the gracious arm stretched out for our help? He says to all who lean on Him, “Fear not.”

I rejoice in the much encouragement you have in your dear little pupils. Who can tell the extent of the blessed influence you may be privileged to exercise through them in years to come, and on posterity yet unborn? The

Rev. F. Morse has published four striking sermons which he preached at Cambridge, in one of which this subject of influence is strikingly spoken of.\* They are written in a very pleasing manner, and would perhaps be read by some of your party.—Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

## XVI. TO THE SAME.

OAKHAM.

DEAR ——,—Mindful of your wishes, I gladly unite with your many friends in offering you very sincere congratulation on the return of the anniversary of your birth. If it be the will of your heavenly Father, may you live to see many more; and as every passing year tells of goodness and mercy, so may it also tell of ever-increasing love and devotedness to Him, in whom you live and move and have your being—to Him who loved you and washed you in His own blood—to Him who still loves you, (for He changes not,) and by His Spirit daily leads you to Himself, the “fountain for sin and uncleanness,” that you may wash and be clean.

On the review of the past thirty years of your life, are you not led especially to mark the long-forbearing mercy that did not cut you off in a state of alienation from God, and the sovereign grace that drew you with the cords of love to Himself? In my own experience, I am constrained to say, “Oh, to grace how great a debtor!” And then follows, or *should* follow, the anxious inquiry, “What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?” The text which presents itself to my mind as suitable to be your motto during the remaining years of your life, (and may they be many years of peaceful enjoyment of God, and of delightful employment in His service!) is, “Therefore be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” In the responsible situation in which God has placed you, doubtless the great enemy

\* “Working for God.” Macmillan & Co., Cambridge.



of your soul, and the world, and the flesh, will alike tempt you to turn aside. Let, then, your eyes be ever directed to Christ; live upon Him; draw daily sap from Him the living vine, that you may be a fruitful branch; and let the constant cry of your soul be, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." I feel sure that, by the grace of God, you do desire to glorify your heavenly Father by bringing forth much fruit, and to abound in the work of the Lord. Are not the most useful Christians those who live nearest to Christ—who are continually found drawing from the treasures laid up in Him for His people's use, and who wait upon the Lord all the day? Like Mary of old, may you be found sitting at Jesus' feet, receiving those lessons of wisdom by which you may shew your love to Him, and serve your day and generation. So at the last, when birthdays shall have come to an end, shall "an abundant entrance be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." I think I can offer you no *better* wish; yet the apostle says, "Now, unto Him that is able to do *exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think.*" Wonderful words! To Him I commend you. May you, dear ——, be "complete in Him," "accepted in the Beloved," and see those near and dear to you encompassed with the same covenant love.—Yours, &c.

## XVII. TO THE SAME.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR ——,—Your unanswered letter is before me; yet, I think, had I not had the greater pleasure of personal intercourse, I should have written soon, in spite of many hindrances. You, perhaps, may not exactly remember your remarks on my completing my sixty-first year. The tendency of them was an evident feeling of desire that you, in the natural course of things, were as near your "long-desired, long-sought and prayed-for

home"—the rest that remaineth for the people of God. True, as you say, you are often thought strange in your feelings on this subject; yet, if the Christian fully realised the blessedness of that home, or, at least, realised it much more than is generally done, the strangeness would be that the longings to go home were not more ardent and constant, especially when we are so burdened here—so "sore let and hindered in running the race set before us." Do you remember the answer of one of Christiana's children to Prudence on this subject? If you have the "Pilgrim's Progress," turn to the passage, (it was during her stay in the house Beautiful,) and I feel sure you will find an echo in your own soul.\*

Nevertheless, there is one thing we should bear in mind—earth is the place where alone we can hope to be employed as instruments in gathering souls to Jesus, in adding jewels to His crown, or in helping our fellow-creatures on their weary way—feeding the lambs, seeking to strengthen the weak, or to uphold those that fall by leading them to the Mighty One. Now, it is the privilege of the children of God "to be fellow-workers with Him." Wonderful words! which, if they were not in the Bible, I dare not write. Did Jesus, when on earth, go about doing good? Did He comfort the mourner, instruct the ignorant, and speak many blessed words to the weary? And does He call us to "tread in His steps?" We must not grow weary of the way. Did He say to His heavenly Father, "I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do?" Should it not be our desire to glorify our God by life or death? It may be you know the hymn beginning—

"Lord, let me feel no anxious care,  
Whether to die or live;  
'Tis mine to love and serve Thee here,  
And Thou the grace wilt give."

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\* "*Prudence*—Why wouldst thou go to heaven?

"*Samuel*—That I may see God, and serve Him without weariness; that I may see Christ, and love Him everlastingly; that I may have the fulness of the Holy Spirit in me, that I can by no means here enjoy."—*Pilgrim's Progress*, Part ii., chap. v.

Death is not so much set before us as the object of desire, in the Word of God, as the coming of our Lord is : "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God." Death is the wages of sin, and though to the believer the sting is gone, and it is rather spoken of as a sleep, yet it is a solemn change, a humbling process, which leaves the "vile body" to return to its dust until the resurrection morn, when it shall be raised incorruptible. "Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon," says the apostle. Therefore, let us, dear friend, continue diligent in the work of the Lord, and by and by the Lord of the vineyard will come to call His labourers home. "Even so ; come, Lord Jesus." . . .

I spent an interesting week with —— on my way here. Delicate health is to her a "crook in the lot," but she feels "it is well," and so the crook is not painful. Boston says, "It is because our will does not lie in a direct line with God's will that there is any crook." I fully believe that perfect resignation to the will of God, or rather the losing our will in His, is Christian perfection. Let us press on towards the attainment of it. In heaven we shall fully know its blessedness.—Yours, &c.

## XVIII. TO THE SAME.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ——,— "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Here is an anchor of promise for your soul to rest upon whilst engaged in the arduous conflict. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not ;" these are the encouraging words of the great Captain of your salvation ; therefore, "Fear not." The deadness, of which you speak, is very painful to experience ; yet is it not part of that discipline by which our God would empty us of self, and make us more sensibly to feel that we are but channels (dry in ourselves), through which His grace shall flow, to water and refresh those to whom He sends us ? No inward foe is so subtle in its workings as pride ; and this vice, so hateful in the sight of God, He will by

various ways keep under in His own children. Your felt inability to pray is the thorn in the flesh to you, and permitted that you may be kept sitting at the feet of your Lord, in all meekness and teachableness of spirit. Wherever good is doing, there Satan will seek to hinder the work. You are taking the surest means of defeating his purpose by seeking early and late the blessing you need. But, if it be so that your heavenly Father, for the trial of your faith, permits this frame of mind to continue, even for a long season, *go on with your work*, and doubt not that God will magnify Himself in you and by you, though to your own heart all appears dull, lifeless, and cold. Your inward hope that in time the answer will come, is doubtless granted you, to uphold and cheer you in the cloudy day, and is sent, may we not believe, as a sweet assurance that it is a true and faithful word which testifies of our great High Priest, that "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." . . . . —I am, dear —, yours, &c.

The letters which we next introduce were written to a Missionary in China, who had previously been Curate at Melton, and in whose ministry Miss Bennett had herself experienced much comfort and delight, and also found invaluable assistance in the religious instruction of her pupils. They manifest that deep interest in God's work, wherever carried on, which gives fervency to the sincere Christian's petition, "Thy kingdom come." An anxiety to strengthen His missionary servant's hands appears throughout; while there are also remarks which shew the humility of soul in which she walked before God:—

## XIX.

MELTON.

DEAR FRIEND,—May this new year bring in an abund-

ant harvest of souls, to the glory of God and your joy, in the barren wilderness where you are now labouring. May it become "a fruitful field," and you and your fellow-labourers gather up, with songs of praise, the sheaves which divine grace has caused to spring up and ripen. Take as your motto, "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." It is a text on which the soul of the sometimes desponding Missionary may rest, and be comforted. . . .

Mr W—— is getting on delightfully at Nassau. He has a large congregation of blacks, and about 600 children, chiefly blacks, in the school. It seems as if God were graciously making all that he does to prosper. At one time he was laid aside by ill health; he was especially anxious about his schools, he prayed to God for them, and God heard his prayer, and sent to the island a lady and gentleman of decided piety and activity, who have undertaken the entire management of them. He is about to give some of the boys a classical education, and to train them up as Missionaries. He has repaired his little church, which was in a sad state of dilapidation, and he wished much to have a peal of bells, but on inquiry found they would cost too much money.

Not long ago, however, a vessel was wrecked on the island, the cargo was sold, and among other articles, three church bells, which were purchased at a moderate price. And now Mr W—— says he expects that even his friend, the Archdeacon, will be jealous when he hears the bells of his little church, such a sound never having been heard in the island before.

Our congregations continue large, and the communicants are so numerous that it has been thought advisable

to have two Communion, the one in the morning at nine o'clock, the other after the service, as usual. Many are much pleased with the alteration; I, for one. There is something peculiarly sweet in the calm peacefulness of a Sabbath morning, when about forty meet to commemorate the great sacrifice. There is no crowding, no anxiety, which I have before felt, to secure a place for my young people where their minds might be more undisturbed. And then the mind is so fresh, not at all wearied by any previous engagement. All these things lead me to rejoice in the change. . . . For myself, I think I can say, "Faint, yet pursuing,"—sometimes rejoicing in God, but more commonly groaning under inbred corruption; yet my hope rests on Christ; I have committed my all to Him. . . . Forget not to pray for us, and believe me, dear friend, yours, &c.

The following contains an interesting instance of the singleness of heart with which Miss Bennett sought to walk so as to please God. Influenced only by a sense of duty, she declined an opportunity of securing a home replete with comforts, of enjoying the society of a devoted Christian friend who had formerly been her pupil, and of rest from the pressing engagements, which at that time were beginning to tax her strength.

## XX.

MELTON.

DEAR FRIEND,—Very delightful was it indeed to receive good tidings from a far country on the very day of my return to Melton; and did it not also seem a word in season to encourage me to continue in that work in which you assure me of your prayers and kind interest? Happy, I think I hear you say, that you have One who ever liveth to intercede, and through whom the prayers of His people find acceptance. But I was under some little



anxiety at that time about an offer that had been made me to reside with one of my former pupils (who has lately lost her husband) as her friend and helper in the work of training up her three dear fatherless children for God. She much wished me to live with her, but, after some consideration and prayer, my mind felt quite clear as to the path of duty, and I remained here. I had some conversation with our dear pastor on the subject, and he agreed with me in the view I had taken. He kindly prayed with me before we parted. I feel my heart much drawn to him and dear Mrs C——. How prone I am to lean on man! I have felt the chastening rod more especially in the removal of valued pastors; and yet I cling to them, as if my spiritual life depended almost upon them. I must try to realise more fully the blessedness of leaning only upon God. . . .

With respect to our own school, we have to record loving-kindnesses and tender mercies, both spiritual and temporal. I do cherish the hope that we shall not labour in vain; indeed, "each sweet Ebenezer we have in review" confirms the promise of His Word, and, imperfect as our efforts are, yet I feel that He in tender mercy will bless them, and give us an abundant harvest. Some who have left us are, I trust, walking in the narrow way, a comfort to their friends and useful in the world, and that amongst those who shall be your joy and crown of rejoicing at the great day of the Lord, some may be gathered from this "nursery." Be assured, dear friend, we cannot forget you. We pray for you in the family. I remember you in my chamber, yet, oh! how imperfectly! You are engaged in a great work, and have many enemies from within and from without, but the Lord is on your side. He says to you, "Fear not." (Isa. xli. 10.) May He keep you outwardly in your body and inwardly in your soul! May He cheer you by His presence, and comfort you with His love! It may be that a very short work is before you. The command appears to have gone forth, "Overturn, overturn," and all nations are shaken. Our

own highly-favoured country stands yet, but ere you receive this the command may have extended to us also. It is our comfort to know there are many praying persons in our land; the righteous are yet left amongst us, and who can tell whether God will not spare unrighteous England for their sakes? Seek for us the advocacy of our Great Intercessor. With regard to my own state of mind, one word and I have done. I seem by faith to have apprehended more of the fulness and freeness of the great salvation, and to know more of that peace which the soul enjoys when it rests solely on the Rock of Ages; yet my shortcomings are so manifold, that I can truly say, "It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed, because His compassions fail not." When I look within, I see cause to lie low in the dust—when I look at Jesus, I can, and do rejoice. And now I commend you to God's gracious care; may He prosper your work, and give you an abundant harvest of souls!—Yours, &c.

## XXI.

MELTON.

DEAR ——,—It was a half-hoped-for, yet almost unexpected, pleasure to find a letter from you on my return home; accept my best thanks for it, and especially for the valuable hints it contains on prayer; they will, I trust, prove an abiding word in season. I have sought to realise more of the presence of the persons of the Triune Jehovah in their different offices, whilst kneeling before the mercy-seat; and I have not sought in vain.

I trembled to think of the dangers you incurred in your voyage to Shanghae, and I desire to bless our heavenly Father for taking you out and bringing you back in safety. Doubtless you would feel much on hearing of the death of Mr ——. How soon his missionary labours are ended! How soon has he entered into rest! Though rest is sweet, and "to be with Christ *far better*;" yet, I remember the feeling with which you expressed to

me your desire of long life, that you might go on with your delightful work. And surely, the faithful minister may be well content to live even to the age of Methuselah, were such the Lord's will, if thereby he could more glorify God and win souls to Christ. I can sympathise with you, in some little measure, in "the yearnings of heart after the land of your birth," and the dear family circle and friends. May not our great High Priest have felt something of this, when He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?" True, He longed to finish the work of man's salvation; but, did He not also long to return to His Father's bosom? One thing we are sure of, He sympathises with the faithful servant who has left father and mother, country and friends, for His sake, and has left an especial promise on record to comfort and encourage him. Christianity, as you well know, heightens the tender feelings of the heart, whilst it also brings them into subjection to the far stronger love of Christ. . . .

I think your present position with regard to the heathen is something like the prophet Habakkuk's, with this remarkable difference, that he was waiting for the Lord to stretch forth His hand and *slay* the wicked, (see chap. i. 12, to end,) and you are waiting for the revealing of that mighty arm which shall *bring salvation* to them. But seeing that our God is slow to anger and of great mercy, and, in the language of our Psalms,

"His waken'd wrath doth slowly move,  
His willing mercy flies apace,"

you may surely take especial comfort from the same gracious promise. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry," not, I suppose, beyond the Lord's appointed time, which is the best time. Man is impatient, and looks eagerly for the speedy fulfilment of his heart's desire; but the Christian has to learn many a lesson of patient wait-

ing. The first Missionaries to the Society Islands had to wait fifteen years before they saw any fruit of their labours. Assuredly, God will be glorified in you and by you ; and His Word, which you are privileged to sow, shall not return unto Him void, though for a while He may call upon you to exercise the patience of hope in His word, working and walking by faith, not by sight. . . .

Whilst at Birmingham, I went to the Jewish synagogue. I heard the learned Rabbi, Dr R——, preach from Numbers xix. He admitted that to him the ceremonial law was incomprehensible. How that which in itself was so unclean as to defile the clean, yet was used to cleanse the defiled, was a mystery he could not explain! Pray that the veil may be removed, and that he may see Jesus the Lamb of God bearing his sins and cleansing his soul. And now I must conclude, hoping, and praying in some sort, that the message addressed to St Paul may be realised in your own experience and Mr R——'s. "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." Like your divine Master, you are called to endure the cross, and for a similar joy; and when you see Him surrounded by the multitudes of His redeemed, some of whom will be your crown of rejoicing in that day, you will indeed be satisfied that for His name's sake you left your country, kindred, and friends, to gather jewels for the Redeemer's crown.—Believe me, in much Christian affection, yours, &c.

The next letter was written at a time when missionary work in China was interrupted by the insurrectionary movement. How it manifests a spirit of holy confidence in the truth of the precious assurance, "All things work together for good," &c. :—

XXII. TO THE SAME.

LONG SUTTON.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Very applicable to you in your

late trial were the words of the Christian poet, "Judge not the Lord," &c. We can well understand that, as one remarks, "though Moab may settle upon his lees, Israel never shall." But you were settling down into a large field of labour—the only labourers in your peculiar field. The untilled, or but partly-cultivated, land seemed to call for you to rise up early and late take rest; but, as if more deeply to impress upon your hearts the great truth, that "except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it," He calls you aside, and bids you rest a while; He calls upon you to believe that yet the work shall go on, though, like the fields in your own land, they appear to lie in the depth of winter, uncared for and unthought of. It may be, that whilst you had leisure thus to "commune with your own heart and be still," the people of Ningpo were taught to set a higher value upon privileges which they would thus learn could easily be taken away from them. Doubtless, the important lesson God would teach His own, by all His dealings with them, is, perfect submission to His will, perfect confidence in His love and wisdom. He sends us "line upon line, and precept upon precept," until by His grace we are enabled, under the most trying circumstances, to say, "Father, thy will be done," "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." In the prospect of the coming infirmities of age—the weakness and helplessness which may be allotted me—I feel daily need to pray for this holy resignation to the divine will. . . . .

And then, your precious child; hold it, dear friends, as a gift from the Lord,—not so much yours, as His. Beware, as Mr James says, of "idols in white frocks." May great grace be with you, and enable you to train him up for God, and to feel that this dear tie only brings you nearer and oftener to God in fervent prayer for him. . . . .

My health, already failing when I gave up the school, has not improved much, nor have I any reason to expect it will. I have, however, abundant cause for thankfulness that I suffer so little pain, that I am very seldom incapacitated from the discharge of the light duties (compara-



tively speaking) which now devolve upon me; and I feel that bodily weakness has, through grace, a tendency to lead my thoughts more frequently to that eternal world, towards which time is rapidly bringing me. Whilst weakness and slight indisposition are "as a moth fretting a garment," when I look first at one hole, then at another, is it not reasonable that I should be increasingly anxious to be clothed upon with immortality? Will you remember me in your prayers, (I daily pray for you,) that I may have a well-grounded assurance of being "accepted in the Beloved?" Go on, dear friends, "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." See Him going before you, "conquering and to conquer." What a gracious Captain you have; how surely He will lead you on to victory! You may have sharp conflicts, severe trials, but God is on your side. Look at your rich treasury of promises,—how manifold, how suited to your every hour of need! "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment shall be condemned. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, I am thy God."—Believe me, with all Christian affection, yours, &c.

Her correspondence with a niece, in whom she took special interest, affords some pleasing specimens of that earnest and useful letter-writing which evinced a real anxiety for her spiritual welfare and comfort, in the different positions of a girl at school, a governess, and a mother.

The two following extracts from letters written to her while at school, confirm our remarks upon the relative value which she placed upon purely secular instruction, and that which was for spiritual edification:—



## XXIII.

TENBY.

MY DEAR S——,—I trust you are now comfortably settled at E——, with a mind fully intent upon profiting by the advantages you will enjoy, both spiritual and temporal. But especially anxious am I now to see you decidedly choosing the “one thing needful.” Nothing would so gladden my heart with regard to yourself, as to learn that God had graciously, by His Holy Spirit, inclined you to devote the morning of your life, the spring-time of your days, to Him who alone can make you truly happy. Earth’s best pleasures are unsatisfactory, uncertain, and quickly pass away; but the peace which Jesus gives to His people is satisfying, abiding, and daily increasing. Then would you, dear S——, be happy? Give yourself unto the Lord; study His Word, with prayers for divine teaching, and be frequently lifting up your heart for His help. “In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths.”

## XXIV. TO THE SAME.

TENBY.

MY DEAR S ——,—I was rejoiced to find your parents were so well satisfied with the progress you are making; but remember, dear love, “*one thing is needful*;” and never shall I be really satisfied until I hear that you have given your heart to God. You are surrounded by enemies, who earnestly long for your destruction. One there is who so loved you that He laid aside His glory, and came down to this lower world to suffer and die for you. In Him is safety, life, and peace. Then tarry not, but turn to Jesus, even to Him who invites you in His word, by His ministers, and by His providence, and you will be happy; for true is that word spoken of the ways of wisdom, “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

I would not undervalue useful accomplishments, but, compared with the things which belong to our everlasting peace, they are as the small dust of the balance; yea, less than nothing, and vanity. And were you to become a highly accomplished woman, yet destitute of the love of God in the heart, I should be grievously disappointed. But I do hope, with the blessing of God on the privileges you enjoy, I mean the religious instruction you receive, that the heart which loves you, and longs for your conversion, may soon have cause to rejoice. . . .—Yours, &c.

The same loving anxiety to strengthen her in walking in the “good and right way” herself, and in seeking to train up her pupils and children in the same, appears in the remainder of the correspondence:—

## XXV.

MELTON.

DEAR S——,—If my letters are welcome to you, yours are no less so to me; I always look for them a day or two before they come. The loving-kindness of our heavenly Father, His faithfulness and truth as shewn to you, fill my heart with joy; and although what I know of the deceitfulness of human nature, and its proneness to depart from God, causes me to “rejoice with trembling,” lest you should ever turn aside from the good way, yet perhaps unbelief suggests the fear, especially when the terms of the new covenant, “I will put my fear in their heart, and they *shall not* depart from me,” are so expressly suited to silence my doubts and encourage my hope. Cleave closely to Jesus and you will be safe; as one beautifully remarks, “The invitations and promises of His Word are the hem of His garment, of which we must take hold by faith.”

God is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. Let us, then, wrestle in prayer with Him for those we

love, and, with Jacob, say, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless them." . . . . Do you not sympathise with me in the value I increasingly set on the privileges offered by the Established Church? The very sublime Communion Service seems to bring us into such close fellowship with the Church above;\* and it is so sweet to bind one's-self afresh to our dear Lord, to receive the pledges of His love, and to devote ourselves with renewed earnestness to His service. Surely we must feel indeed that He is a gracious Master, long-suffering and forbearing, most tender and kind, and that His service is "perfect freedom." Happy they who have taken His yoke upon them, for it is easy, and His burden, for it is light. We had a thunder-storm here on Sunday. It was very general, and, being so unusual, created much alarm in some. What terror will the sound of the archangel's trumpet cause to those who are not in Christ! How great the privilege of being able in that day to lift up the head with joy, and to exclaim, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." May this be our happy experience, dear S——; and may all those we love be found in that day among the wheat which Christ shall gather into His garner!—Yours, &c.

## XXVI. TO THE SAME.

MELTON.

DEAR S——,— . . . . I rejoice in your privileges, and feel for you in your trials. Both are working for your good. With regard to the latter, it is written, "It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth." Still, do not forget what I have advised you from my own experience, that to speak of another's faults, whether child or not, answers no good purpose, but embitters the spirit against the person offending, and renders the person complaining less forbearing. It is good to carry such trials to God

\* *Vide* Chap. III., page 128.

alone. He can and will effectually help, for all hearts are His ; and when your little ones manifest evil tempers, consider who is at work upon their evil hearts, and lift up your heart in prayer for present help for yourself and them.—Yours, &c.

## XXVII. TO THE SAME.

MELTON.

DEAR S——,— . . . . Mrs —— is rapidly sinking. I saw her yesterday, and could have wept at the sight of her altered countenance. It is a solemn thought to be with one who is just on the verge of eternity. It is not unmixed with hope and joy, at the mighty change that is at hand. What must it be to see Jesus ! to feel yourself safe in heaven ; to be perfectly holy ; filled with the Spirit ; filled with love ! This blessedness I hope dear Mrs —— will soon enjoy. . . . My feeling with regard to the millennium agrees with yours. I think I can say, I long for our dear Lord's appearing. It is the prevailing feeling of my mind, sometimes stronger than at others. At the same time, though I lean to the idea of a personal reign, there are difficulties in the way I cannot overcome so as fully to embrace that doctrine ; and having so very little time for reading, I think it better to confine myself to what is written so plainly, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein,—practical experimental religion ; therefore, I prefer books of that class.—Yours, &c.

## XXVIII. TO THE SAME.

CLIFTON.

DEAR S——,—In answer to yours, I have written a few simple questions as hints for you to improve and enlarge upon, according to the abilities of your dear little pupils. It is important to interest and not tire them. Most children are fond of finding out texts themselves. Of course, in reading the Old Testament, you will select

chapters easy of comprehension. The great secret of the attention which I was often gratified by observing amongst my pupils, was the drawing down help for us all, by ejaculatory silent prayers whilst reading. I have reason to believe our morning readings at school were blessed to some. What do you think of reading the Old and New Testaments alternately? A verse or two, I think, is enough to learn, and let all be repeated on the Saturday or Sunday. Mrs ——'s governess told me last evening, she was once living in a family where, when the mother went to tuck her children up at night, she always gave them a text to think about. These children were also taught to consider, before they knelt down, *what* they had to ask of God for themselves or others, often referring to what might have occurred during the day. They seemed by this means to enter more fully into the nature of prayer (as your dear —— once did, when you heard him pray that he might be kind to ——), and those of this family that are grown up are very decided Christians. I think maps of the Holy Land, as in the days of Old Testament history, and also of the New, are useful helps to interest your children. How much they will enjoy your giving up yourself to them. . . .—Believe me, dear S——, yours, &c.

We subjoin the questions referred to at the commencement of this letter:—

What persons have we been reading about in this chapter? Tell me their names. Can you tell me anything about what they did? Was it right? How do you know it was? What does the Bible say about it? For example, Gen. xxxvii. 13–16. Joseph obeyed his father. What is the fifth commandment? Was it wrong? Gen. xxxvii. 20. Tell me a text about this. Exod. xx. 13. What places? Can you find them in the map? Do we read of these persons or places in any other part of the Bible? What does this chapter teach us about God?

His power? His goodness? His love? The care He takes of His people? How He hears their prayer? How He punishes the wicked? Do you wish to be good and obedient as —— was? Pray to God to give you His Holy Spirit, and to make you His child. Will God hear you? Luke xi. 13.

It is remarkable that the three letters, which come next in order, refer to the peaceful deaths of three of Miss Bennett's former pupils, — cheering evidence that her labour had not been “in vain in the Lord.”

## XXIX.

MELTON.

DEAR S——,—My inner man rejoices that dear E—— has escaped all the snares of this most ensnaring world, and is in heaven; for surely it would be wrong to doubt it. When we look at the Word of God, we there see what a high value Jesus places on those little ones that believe in Him, (Matt. xviii. 6, and x. 42,) by whom I understand weak believers, or young Christians. And again it is said of this dear Redeemer, “A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench.” Dear E—— was mercifully placed under the sound of the gospel; religious instruction was imparted to her, (however imperfectly,) and her heart was evidently opened to receive and love it; and then, just at the time when she was about to be exposed to the temptations of the world, when, through her gentleness and affectionate disposition, she might have been led to yield to the wishes of those who love the world, by entering into its follies, her watchful and tender Shepherd took her to Himself. There, in His fold above, she is safe, nothing can hurt, nothing distress her. O happy E——! We should not lament what the children of the world would call thy untimely fate; but rather rejoice, that though thy sun is gone down while it was yet day, it was only to rise in glory and set



no more. Surely we must say of all this, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. His own right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory." To Him be all the praise. It remains for us to consider, what is the voice of God's providence to us? It tells us of the uncertainty of life—of the necessity of being ready for the great change; it teaches us "so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." When uncertain of dear E——'s state of mind, I felt how necessary it was to be earnest in prayer for the present salvation of the dear children around me; not resting satisfied with the hope that the good seed sown in their hearts would one day spring up and bring forth fruit, but seeking that they might, even now, turn to the Lord, and give up their hearts to Him. . . . —Yours, &c.

## XXX.

MELTON.

DEAR S——,—Your last most welcome letter brought with it another testimony, to the many I have already received, that our God hears and answers prayer. As I read it, I thanked God and took courage. Be not afraid; He who hath begun a good work in you, will carry it on to His own honour and glory.

"When first before His mercy-seat,  
You did to Him your all commit,  
He gave you warrant from that hour  
To trust His wisdom, love, and power."

Satan may be permitted to vex and tempt you, but he shall not prevail, because "help is laid on One that is mighty." If you observe your great and good Shepherd's advice, "Abide in me," you must be safe. David encouraged himself with the assurance of persevering grace being given him, when he said, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me;" and this from the consideration of His enduring mercy. Like him, you may plead, "Forsake not the work of thine own hands," and you, with him, are heir to the same promise, "I will never leave thee,

nor forsake thee." Should you be led by your own heart, and the temptations of Satan, to fall into sin, you must go at once to the blood of sprinkling. Sin on the conscience hardens it; therefore, it is said, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." He is a God who delighteth in mercy, who multiplies pardon. Never let Satan hide from your eyes the tenderness, love, and compassion of our great Redeemer, (Ps. ciii. 13, 14.) He would fain represent Him as a hard Master; but the more the Christian grows in grace, the more he feels that "God is love." Go on, then, dear S——, looking for help from above, and may the blessing of God rest on you always!

Dear G—— P—— just survived her friend a fortnight. She died last Saturday; her end was peace. I have not heard particulars. I believe she did not know E—— had gone first. How joyful a meeting in glory! —Believe me, dear S——, yours, &c.

## XXXI.

MARSH GIBBON.

DEAR S——,—In your inquiries for a permanent governess, I think you will agree with me, that consistent piety should be the first consideration, early impressions are so abiding. I have not written to you since dear P——'s death. Though we had always feared, yet we clung to hope; but the dear one herself appears to have made every arrangement, "in case," as she wrote to ——, "I should die suddenly, or be unconscious." From the calmness she evinced, from her repeated assurances, in answer to the anxious inquiries of her parents and brother, that she was happy, that Jesus was present with her, added to the many proofs she evinced in life of a renewed heart and mind, we humbly hope that she was indeed prepared, leaning only on her Saviour, looking simply to Him that she might pass "through the valley of the shadow of death" into life. Her countenance after

death was irradiated with the sweetest smile I ever saw. It was quite unearthly—so bright, so heavenly; it seemed to say, “Weep not for me. I am so happy.” And it *did* cheer the hearts of the mourning parents and friends as they gazed upon it; but, oh! could we see her now, what would that passing brightness be to the glory that is given to all the ransomed of the Lord? I am reading again, with much pleasure, and I hope profit, “Goode on the Better Covenant.” When laid aside from domestic duties, I should recommend it to you. It is so refreshing to look over our title-deeds to our better inheritance; to see it secured to us by a Father’s love, a Saviour’s purchase, and the Spirit’s grace. “Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” The seclusion of the chamber seems especially to be an opportunity for communing with our God, laying open our hearts before Him with the prayer in Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24, renewing our covenant with Him, and committing ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, into our faithful Redeemer’s hands, to be sanctified and made meet for His glorious presence. . . . .—Believe me, dear —, yours, &c.

## XXXII.

MARSH GIBBON.

DEAR S——,— . . . . I have written thus far without expressing my sincere and best wishes for you and yours on the opening of another year.

The Psalmist tells us what is that *good* we should desire for ourselves,—the light of our heavenly Father’s countenance, in whose favour is life. How is this only good to be obtained? Through Jesus. United to Him by a living faith, and abiding in Him, we shall find grace in His sight, and be accepted in the Beloved.

To the anxious mother surrounded by her little ones, who are continually making demands upon her time and thoughts, it may seem almost impossible to live near to God; but there is a fulness in Jesus for all that we need.

Grace and strength are treasured up in Him, and the short ejaculatory cry for help is as prevalent with Him as the long, earnest prayers of those whose greater leisure affords them a larger measure of this high privilege of communion with God. His eye rests upon those who are burdened with many cares; and to them especially is the direction sent, "casting all your cares upon Him," accompanied with the sweet assurance, "*He careth for you.*"

The beginning of a new year, as well as the departing of an old one, does, I think, awaken serious thoughts in every one more or less. We had an impressive lecture last evening from your cousin in the school-room. His subject was the 90th Psalm. Speaking of the eternity of God, he reminded us, that we had entered upon a never-ending existence, and that we should endure as long as God himself. The thought was not a new one, yet it came home to my heart, and led me to feel that, as a minister once remarked on his death-bed, "We are only half awake," both as regards ourselves and those very dear to us. Nay, if we realised that *all* have entered upon this existence, and will assuredly be for ever happy or miserable, how greatly would our desires be quickened after their salvation,—how diligently should we labour to promote it to the utmost of our power. . . .—Believe me, dear S——, yours, &c.

XXXIII. TO THE REV. ——.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ——,—I not unfrequently think of you when I am reading, and if I meet with any suitable remark, I note it, that I may tell you of it. Here is one by Ambrose Serle:—"It is always a good sign for a preacher when the poor and the despised of the world press to hear the Word, and hang, as it were, on his mouth; when the aisles are filled as well as the seats, and when, instead of exchange of compliments, and idle or irreverent discourses, the people pass off in silent reflection, as though they

seriously intended to carry something of what was said within their heart quite on to their homes." How often I have thought so when returning home after a most searching, solemn discourse. I have felt almost surprised at the light-heartedness of the looks and conversation of those around me. How gladly, also, would the earnest, soul-seeking minister exchange the flattery and compliments of his hearers, for the silent, thoughtful countenances, evidently pondering in their hearts the great truths that have been brought before them! I will give you another quotation from the same book:—"Rarely do even sound doctrines possess the happy effect of truly converting sinners, when adorned with the meretricious splendour of man's wisdom, with a laboured style, with ornamented flourishes, with the glitter of human wit or oratory, employed too much for the purpose of gaining human applause. For often, in these cases, 'The sheep look up, but are not fed.' 'God generally leaves man to himself, when man looks rather to himself than to his God.'"

I remember an instance of this recorded in the life of Mr Forsyth. He had written a sermon without prayer—he preached it without effect, feeling in himself great deadness of spirit, and remarking the same in his congregation. He came home and burnt his sermon, and determined for the future, by the grace of God, to compose all his sermons with much and earnest prayer. . . .—Yours, &c.

#### XXXIV. TO ONE OF HER EARLIEST PUPILS.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR C——,—I rejoice in your privileges, and trust that they may be abundantly blessed to you all; for, without the accompanying power of the Spirit, bringing the word to the heart, a Paul may preach and an Apollos water in vain. Hence it is our duty and our wisdom, not only to ask a blessing on the word preached before we go to hear it, but also, when hearing, to let our hearts ascend, as did Nehemiah's, "So I prayed to the God of heaven;"

and we shall find a gracious answer, warming, refreshing, and strengthening us. Your dear nieces must, indeed, be quite companions for you; I should like to see them and all of you very much. It may be I may have that pleasure in the spring; but I feel that life and its concerns are too uncertain to anticipate the future, whether for good or evil. Sweet it is to remember, that all that concerns us is ordered by infinite wisdom; and the kind permission and counsel given us is, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

It seems to me that the best of God's saints sometimes failed in this. Had Abraham, who left his country and father's house at the command of God, sought counsel of Him ere he entered into Egypt, he might have escaped the sin into which he fell. And had Lot, in his choice of a residence for himself and family, consulted his heavenly Guide, he had never pitched his tent toward Sodom, nor have been afterward found dwelling there. So when David went wrong, the sorrows he brought upon himself may be traced to this cause. How needful to watch and pray continually! . . . —Yours, &c.

## XXXV. TO THE SAME.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR C——,—Since your dear sister's letter, which spoke of merciful preservation of herself and family from cholera, I have been led to hope (not hearing to the contrary) that this fearful visitation has passed over, and left you, through mercy, unhurt, but not, I trust, unbenefited. For when death appears so near and so sudden in its approach, it will, through grace, lead us to deep searchings of heart,—to the anxious inquiry, "Am I ready? How shall I appear before God?" If thus you and I have been led to examine the ground of our hope; if, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we have been brought to see more and more of the depravity of our heart by nature, our guilt and helplessness, the power of the blood of



Christ to cleanse, and the Spirit of Christ to sanctify and uphold ; if we are resting our every hope on Christ for salvation (Acts iv. 12), then may we rejoice that, let death come in what form it may, it will be gain to us. For, as one observes, "Death to a believer is an inlet to happiness ; it is the gate of life ; death pulls off our rags, and gives us change of raiment ; it is a believer's ferryman to ferry him over to the land of rest ; it opens the portal into heaven." Many intimations have you had, dear C——, of the breaking down of this earthly tabernacle ; but these shakings have only been sent to quicken your desires after that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And seeing that, as I trust it is, your trials have been sanctified and blessed to you, you have cause to rejoice in them as tokens of your heavenly Father's love, who chastens every son whom He receives. It is better to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin which are for a season, quickly passing away, and leaving a sting behind. . . . Believe me, dear C——, yours, &c.

## XXXVI.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR C——,—I met with some nice remarks yesterday, in a book which has lately been given me, entitled "Work ; or, Plenty to Do, and How to Do It." They are these :— "Look around, then, you who are yearning to be employed in the service of your God, and try to realise what He has given you to do to-day, and do not look beyond it. Strength is promised according to your day, but not according to your morrow. Every-day work requires every-day asking. Whatever it is, take it first to God. Before you begin, kneel and implore His blessing ; ask Him for a fresh, diligent spirit ; ask Him for a spirit of patience and meekness, in contending with all the little wearisome difficulties and annoyances connected with it ; ask Him to enable you not only to bear the cross, but to 'take it up,' denying yourself, and following the footsteps of the Lord

Jesus, (Luke ix. 23.)” The above extracts may prove a word in season, a refreshing to you and —— whilst actively engaged in the duties of life. But you have your peculiar trial, into which I can also, in some little measure, enter, —I mean, ill health. Often when I would go out strong to labour for Him who has bought me with His blood, some little ailment comes which bids me sit still, and then the old man within begins to murmur and be cast down. Let us not yield to him, remembering that everything concerning us is ordered by infinite wisdom and love ; let our prayer rather be,

“ O Lord, my best desire fulfil,  
 And help me to resign  
 Life, health, and comfort to Thy will,  
 And make Thy pleasure mine.”

I hope you enjoyed ——’s society without any drawback. These earthly meetings are pleasant ; but what are they compared with an eternal reunion in heaven?  
 . . . .—Yours, &c.

## XXXVII.

MELTON MOWBRAY.

DEAR C——,— . . . I suppose the Confirmation is now over ; may it have been a season of much spiritual blessing to your dear nieces. With many young ones it has been a time of decision, of fixing their hearts upon God, upon the enjoyment of His favour and the privilege of serving Him. Doubt not, then, that sooner or later you will see the reward of all your anxious care and love in these cherished ones. I rejoice that you have so excellent a clergyman. It is such a help to a right-minded instructress to have a faithful minister to strengthen her hands and confirm her instructions at home by his public teaching. I hope he calls on you occasionally, and drops a word of advice. How strange it seems to me that some of my old pupils are verging upon fifty ! It makes me feel my own age the more. Truly our life is but as grass, in the morning growing up fresh and green, and in the evening cut down and withered ; but the children of God

are compared to wheat, and shall in due time be gathered into His garner. Rain and sunshine have passed over you, dear C——; there has been the ploughing of the gospel over your soul, the sowing of the seed, its springing up amidst sorrow and trial; and, in due time, there shall be the harvest-home, when you and many dear to you shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord your Redeemer, and be for ever sheltered from storm and tempest in His Father's house.—Believe me, dear C——, yours, &c.

## XXXVIII. TO ANOTHER EARLY PUPIL.

MELTON, *March 4, 1847.*

DEAR MRS ——,—I gladly avail myself of the leisure afforded me by a holiday given on my birthday, to reply to your welcome and affectionate letter. A birthday, especially when one has to number fifty years, should give rise to serious reflections; and my mind has been lately exercised with the important question—“Have I been born again?” To talk with you on the subject may be profitable to us.

The necessity for this change arises from the state of the heart by nature. It is a fearful truth, which the mind (ignorant in some degree of the evil which dwells within) shrinks from, that the carnal (that is, the un-renewed) mind is enmity against God. (Rom. viii. 7.) Hence, it is impossible that with such feelings we could enter into the kingdom of heaven, and dwell in that holy place, the very atmosphere of which is love. So our Lord solemnly assures us, in the third chapter of St John's Gospel, that we must be “born again,” or “from above.” There are feelings which may be excited in the mind that look like this new birth, and yet may arise from natural conscience or some exciting cause. The work which will abide when He cometh, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, is His own work, the Spirit's work upon the soul, described in Ezek. xi. 19, 20, and in Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27. Now, although we cannot make this change in our own

hearts, yet we can ask for it, and the gracious promise is—“Ask, and ye *shall* receive ; seek, and ye *shall* find.”

Let us, then, dear friend, be importunate with our God that He would hear, and answer, and bless us, for the sake of that precious Saviour who has said—“Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will do it.” . . . .  
—Believe me, yours, &c.

## XXXIX. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

MELTON.

DEAR MRS ——,—I feel I must write to greet you on your arrival at your new home, and to offer you my best wishes, that He who alone can make that home a truly happy one, may sanctify it by His abiding presence.

Assuredly, if, like the patriarchs of old, you acknowledge Him as your God, He will be mindful of you. Abraham, in all his wanderings, wherever he pitched his tent, set up an altar to the Lord, and that amidst a world of idolaters ; and it was clearly seen by those who dwelt near him whose servant he was ; in like manner the Christian is called upon so to let his light shine before men that God may be glorified.

Try, my dear young friend, by the grace of God, to set this one object before you,—to glorify God. Remember, He hath said—“This people have I formed for myself ; they shall shew forth my praise ;” and though these words are strictly applicable to the children of Israel, they are also to the seed of Abraham by faith. Let it be your daily prayer—“Glorify Thyself in me and by me.” In the diligent and prayerful study of God’s Word, you will find plain directions for your future walk in life. The last chapter of Proverbs, making all due allowance for different customs and manners, is an excellent guide to young women ; especially that beautiful description—“She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.”

Strive to recommend the religion of Christ to those who

“know Him not.” “Walk circumspectly towards those who are without;” and whenever your conscience may condemn you of any unfaithfulness or inconsistency, have recourse at once to the blood of sprinkling; for sin, however small it may appear, whilst unacknowledged, defiles and hardens the conscience, whilst a sense of blood-bought pardon melts the heart with tenderness and keeps the soul in peace. . . . And now, I think, I must draw my long letter to a conclusion.

We are expecting Mr C—— this afternoon to pay us a farewell visit, and to give us for the last time, as a school, his truly faithful advice. It is a painful visit to look forward to,—may it be a profitable one. Yesterday evening all the District Visitors were invited to tea at the Vicarage. The room was full; and that, too, was a painful parting. Oh! how bright will that world be, where pain and parting shall be known no more. Mr C—— said he and the church of M—— had been like two ships sailing a while together on the ocean of life, bound to the same port, now separated by Providence, but finally, we hope, to meet in that haven where we would be. . . .

To have your best earthly friend like-minded with yourself is a great blessing. Pray remember me to him.—Believe me, dear Mrs ——, yours, &c.

## XL. TO THE SAME.

MELTON.

DEAR MRS ——,—I am now comfortably settled with dear ——, and the poor old school is occupied by another. I did not feel at leaving it nearly so much as I once expected I should have done: the last half-year, on account of the fever being so prevalent in the town, was one of very great anxiety, insomuch that I feel relief from that anxiety like the removing of a heavy burden; still I can hardly realise the fact that I have closed my scholastic labours. I have been permitted by grace to sow the incorruptible seed of the Word; and now I am enabled by

faith to expect the fulfilment of the gracious promise—"Thou shalt find it after many days;" not, perhaps (as an aged Sunday-school teacher once observed to me) until the wrinkles come upon the brow; then, in time of trouble, the lessons of instruction return with double force, and bring forth in those to whom affliction is sanctified "the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

It may be a useful inquiry to us both—When may trials be said to be sanctified? I will tell you what I think on the subject; you can, perhaps, add a few more items,—when they draw us near to God, as in the case of Manasseh, (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12); when they wean us from the world; when they make us feel that earth is not our rest, and lead us to set our affections on things above; when they make sin, the original cause of all sorrow and suffering, increasingly hateful; when they strengthen our faith and hope in God, from the sweet experience of His sustaining grace, (see Rom. v. 3-5.) Afflictions are blessings in disguise, when grace is given us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God; indeed, the perfection of the Christian character is to lose our will in the will of God, and to be able to say from the heart—"As Thou wilt,—when Thou wilt,—where Thou wilt." Dear friend, I am far from having attained to this. Let us exhort one another to press on towards the attainment. "Onwards" must be the Christian's motto; "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before."—Yours, &c.

#### XLI. TO THE SAME.

I am truly concerned to hear of your continued, or rather renewed illness. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction," is a text which seems to explain the Lord's dealings with you and the partner of your joys and sorrows; for while yours is the trial of actual suffering, his is that of seeing you suffer. Faint not, dear friend, under your Father's chastening; only cling the



closer to Him ; take a firmer grasp, by faith, of the hand that sustains whilst the other smites ; and, as old Rutherford remarks, though He grind you to powder, let your very dust cry out, " Yet will I trust in Thy salvation." Better, far better to be chosen, though in the furnace of affliction, than to hear the dreadful sentence, " Ephraim is joined to idols : let him alone." Yet a few more passing years, and sorrow and sighing shall have fled away for ever. " The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads." Our Lord himself was a " man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ;" and whilst He gives you to drink of His cup, He sympathises with you. He watches over you, and He is making all to work for your everlasting good. Cast, then, all your care upon Him ; be not over anxious about the future, but seek for grace to lie passive in His hands, and to know no will but His.

## XLII. TO THE SAME.

When doubts arise as to your love to your Saviour, carry them at once to Him—plead with Him to make it plain to you, to search and try your heart ; earnestly entreat Him to make and keep it His.

" Blessed Jesus, heavenly Lamb,  
Thine, and only Thine I am,  
Take me, body, spirit, soul,  
Only Thou possess the whole."

He is faithful ; doubt not. " Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." And with regard to our besetting sins, let us lay them at the foot of the cross. The moment we feel we have given way, let us look up at once to the blood of sprinkling. He who enjoined His disciples to forgive until seventy times seven, will surely do the same—yea, infinitely more. " Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity ?" " He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy;" but not that we, presuming on that mercy, should go on in

sin. Fearful is the state of that man who would thus turn the grace of God into licentiousness. No! the Psalmist says, "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Sin on the conscience hardens the heart; sin washed away in the blood of Jesus leaves the contrite sinner more under the constraining love of Him who was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," and makes us doubly watchful, lest we should grieve and dishonour One who bought us with His own blood.

#### XLIII. TO THE SAME.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR FRIEND,—I was glad to receive yours, in which you were able to speak of better health in body, and more comfort in soul. Query—Are not these often, though not necessarily, linked together?

Close and mysterious is the connexion between mind and body. We are ready to write bitter things against ourselves when the morbid temperament of the body affects the feelings of the mind, and we feel nothing but deadness and depression. Hence the importance of not drawing comfort from frames and feelings, but from the believing contemplation of the finished work of our great Surety and Advocate. The more we are enabled to realise our interest in Him, the more we shall love Him, and the more shall we be devoted to His service. The language of our hearts will be, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" Still, the sunshine of the soul is most cheering; but the keeper of the vineyard knows also how needful are the clouds that often hang over it. All tend to bring the fruit to perfection—all are parts of that gracious process by which He is preparing the soul for Himself. In your dealings with your child, you may often be reminded of your heavenly Father's dealings with you. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten;" and again, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." . . . .

With gentleness and firmness, seek to subdue your little boy's self-will; make him obedient in little things; he will, by patient watchfulness on your part, acquire the habit of quickly doing as he is bid, and then how much trouble it will save you. You will be trying to lead his thoughts upward to the God who made him. You have perhaps tried the plan of leading him to kneel at your knee, whilst you offer up a little prayer in simple language, suited to his understanding. It is sweet for parent and child thus to meet at the throne of grace, and gives a bright hope of their meeting hereafter at a throne of glory. . . .—Believe me, dear friend, yours, &c.

We insert the following letter simply because it is one among many which manifest Miss Bennett's continued interest in the spiritual well-being of those to whom she had given counsel when under her own roof. The word of advice upon family prayer may suggest to some of our readers a suitable subject for introduction into their congratulatory letters to the newly married:—

## XLIV.

DEAR ———,—It was indeed a pleasure to me to see you so comfortably fixed in your new home. May it prove a very happy one to you and Mr ———. From my long previous knowledge of you, I have an assured confidence that it will be your constant endeavour to discharge faithfully the new and responsible duties now devolving upon you. Yet, dear ———, what is our own strength but perfect weakness? Do we not continually need grace and wisdom to uphold and guide us? To whom can we look for help, but unto Him in whom is all wisdom and strength? To whom should we go, but to the gracious giver of all our earthly blessings? The only way to enjoy these His gifts is, to realise that they are the proofs

of His loving-kindness and tender care, and daily to acknowledge them as such. May I, then, claim the privilege of a friend, who has long felt an interest in your welfare, and thus venture to suggest not only to you, but to one now naturally far more interested in you, that it is good to begin the day and close it with prayer *in the family*, as well as in private? Let your servant know the privilege of living in such a family. Without God's blessing, how can you do well? Without His gracious care, how can you be safe? The time consecrated to God by prayer will shed a happy influence on the rest of the day; and when, in the exercise of his profession, Mr —— is called away either at night or morning, will it not be a comfort to you to commend him in prayer to God, who alone can preserve and bless his "going out and coming in?" If left, on such occasions, to you and your servant, you may still claim the promise—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." . . . —Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

XLV. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

MELTON.

DEAR ——,— . . . . Seeing that the time is short, it behoves us to be active in doing all in our power to promote the knowledge of God and His "great salvation." It is an honour, indeed, to be employed in His blessed service, even to be, as it were, but hewers of wood and drawers of water; for our own gracious Master so condescendingly accepts our poor, imperfect services, mean as they are. Yet, one thing we must remember,—His searching eye looks at the motive. Does He see love there, however weak or faint? If so, He will not despise it; but, if love be wanting, services the most active, sacrifices the most self-denying, are all unacceptable. Hence follows the necessity of a daily habit of self-scrutiny, and of laying the heart, as it were, open before God, with the humble prayer, "Search me, O God, and

know my heart ; try me, and know my thoughts." Satan will not, perhaps, mind so much that we diligently cultivate another's vineyard, if we do but neglect our own. Oh what snares surround us on every side ! What need to " watch and pray ! " How well does the apostle urge us to " walk circumspectly," for it is a narrow path that leads to life ! Yet here is our confidence, " Help is laid on One that is mighty ; " and though the path be narrow, " He keepeth the feet of His saints, and upholdeth all that trust in Him. " " Abide in me ; " these are His own words, and we are not only enjoined to abide in Him as a sure hiding-place, but also as a branch abides in the tree and draws sap and life from it. . . . —Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

## XLVI. TO THE SAME.

BUSHY.

DEAR ——,— . . . . I have much enjoyed my visit here : I have had leisure for quiet converse with my own heart. I seem to breathe in a purer atmosphere whilst with this Christian lady, and my spirit is not tried by the practices and manners of the world, as when with worldly people. I do not wonder at young persons, in the fervour of their first love, being led away by the appearance of holy abstraction from the world presented by a convent ; but, besides its being only appearance, there is a selfishness connected with it, contrary to the command of our Lord, " Occupy till I come ; " contrary to His will, revealed in the prayer, " I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world ; but, that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil." All this, supposing *truth*, and not *error*, spiritual worship, and not vain superstition, prevailed in those dark recesses of iniquity. Oh ! to grace how greatly we are indebted, that our lot has fallen under the clearer light of gospel truth ; yet how great our responsibilities ! . . . . —Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

## XLVII. TO THE SAME.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR——,—Be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” Will not this be a suitable motto for you to commence the swiftly-coming year with, if you are spared? It is an exhortation full of encouragement, for yours is the work of the Lord, and you may by faith hear His voice saying, “Be not afraid, for I am with thee.” Again, here is the assurance “that it is not in vain;” how can it be, if God be with you? And, lastly, it is “in the Lord,”—done in His name, by His strength, and with His blessing. Happy servant, under such a Master! Happy child, with such a Father! Oh! how carefully and diligently should His servants serve Him! How watchfully and prayerfully, ever looking to Him! Even as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, thus should our eyes wait upon the Lord our God. Nevertheless, though it is very blessed to be actively employed for our God, we have great need to be watchful and prayerful; for assuredly, the enemy will lay snares for us. He will tempt us to be puffed up. This feeling will work silently and slowly, so that we can scarcely tell how it got in. He will tempt us to do the work of the Lord negligently and mechanically, without ejaculatory prayer. He will throw in fuel, it may be, by the commendation of others, to our self-seeking. He will take advantage of our weakness, weariness, and sloth. Truly, we have need to be “sober, and watch unto prayer,” to gird up the loins of our mind, to “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” How cheering the promise to the faint and tried soldier of the cross, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life!” And then how great the privilege of being made an instrument of good to others; to be a channel through which mercy



may be brought to the penitent sinner ; to be permitted to point the weary and heavy laden to Christ ; to walk in His steps “who went about doing good !” . . . . — Believe me, yours, &c.

## XLVIII. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ———,— . . . . I am glad to hear from your dear mother a confirmation of your own report of restored health. I expect you will ever carry about with you that delicacy of constitution, which faithfully warns you that this is not your rest. Faithful indeed is the warning, for it is the voice of your heavenly Father, who will not suffer you “to settle on your lees ;” but would urge you to press forward towards the mark for the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The impulse of the renewed heart leads the soul to long to be with Him who has ransomed it from destruction ; but there are close and dear ties, which still draw downwards, and also opportunities for proving our love to Christ, (which we cannot have in heaven,) because we have here earthly duties, as well as calls for the exercise of forbearance and kindness towards our fellow-creatures. There will be no call for any of these Christian graces where all is holiness and love, and where every want is supplied from the fulness of that fountain of joy which flows at God’s right hand for evermore. Two of these dear ties are now gone before, and will, I trust, serve as magnets to draw their parents after them ; and towards those who remain, it is a sweet and pleasant duty to draw them on by precept and example, and especially by earnest persevering prayer to the great Head of the Church, that He would, by the mighty power of His Spirit, unite you all a happy family in Christ.

The encouragement we have for prayer arises from the consideration that Christ identifies Himself with His people in their prayers. As Hewitson remarks, “When

Christ presents your prayer as if it were His own ; when He sprinkles it with His blood, and enforces it with the plea of His infinite worthiness, as the Lamb that was slain ; how can you fail of being heard, or of receiving a fulfilment of your desires ?” . . . . —Yours, &c.

## XLIX. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR ——,—How very kind of you to send me such a liberal gift ! . . . . May I point out to you a text I was reading this morning, which I have found again and again fulfilled in my own experience ? “He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.” How graciously the Lord here identifies Himself with the poor and destitute, counting their debts His own ; and what a security ! I was about to say, May your barns overflow with plenty ! but I would rather say, May you both be enriched with “the unsearchable riches of Christ ;” for earthly treasures can give no real happiness, and they soon pass away, or we go from them ; but heavenly treasure abideth, yea, increaseth, for the progress of the child of God is from grace to grace, from glory to glory. I was talking only yesterday with the wife of one of my blind pupils about the selection we should make ; we settled upon the Epistles, and then she remarked, “How interesting the Acts of the Apostles are ; our minister once gave some lectures on this part of God’s Word ;” to which I replied, “But the Epistles and the Acts will cost more than £2, and I have only £1 !” Now, through your bounty, I have two, so that four blind persons will soon, I hope, be able to enjoy all these portions of the Word of God. To my three adults I have added a young girl, born blind, who begins to read so as to understand what she reads. I have a dear Christian friend here, who manages my library in my absence, so that the books are in constant use by them. Yesterday, a blind youth in the Infirmary read to me from the fifteenth verse

of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew to the end of the twenty-sixth chapter, in three quarters of an hour ; once it would have taken him as long to have read eight or ten verses ! His books are his solace and delight. I trust they may be the means of opening the eyes of his spiritual understanding, that, perceiving his own need of Jesus, he may be led to know Him, whom to know is life eternal. On the others this great light hath dawned, I hope ; indeed, one is an experienced Christian. . . . Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

L. TO THE SAME.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ——,— . . . What can I say that you do not already know ? For, as I picture to myself the anxious mother, seeking to train up her children for God, carefully watching over the first buddings of evil, checking wayward tempers, trying to subdue self-will, and cultivating a spirit of love amongst her little ones to their parents, and to each other, I feel assured that she knows where her strength lies, that she is no stranger at a throne of grace, but may daily be found there asking for grace to help, and wisdom to direct her in all her arduous duties. I will only say, dear ——, draw nearer to your Lord ; be found like your namesake of old, sitting at His feet, learning of Him ; and then, go forth to practise, still feeling that He is near ; and in the every-day trials of life, its petty vexations and anxieties, let there be a sweet, silent communication going on between you and your gracious Helper, who will assuredly read the desire of your heart, hear the ejaculatory petition, and prove Himself an ever-present, faithful, prayer-hearing God. “Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, and whose hope is in the Lord their God.” . . .—Believe me, yours, &c.

The practical advice upon the subject of district-visiting, contained in the following letter to another correspondent, is worthy of special attention :—

## LI.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ——,—I am so pleased to hear from our mutual friend, Miss ——, that you are going to undertake a district, that I feel I must write you a few lines of encouragement, knowing that it is a work much needing a word of this kind, although it does really bring with it its own reward. In a little book about "Caring for Souls," I find this remark. Speaking of the privilege of visiting the cottages of the poor, it says, "The primary inducement is, 'For ye serve the Lord Christ.'" To work, to speak, to think, to act for Him, should be the ruling motive, the secret, hidden spring which sets all things in motion, the "one thing needful," if we would have true happiness without alloy. But we are also really serving ourselves when visiting the poor; for we can scarcely imagine the extent of the benefit reaped by our own souls, while we are endeavouring to impart instruction to others. It promotes cheerfulness, and even calmness of mind. It certainly affords abundant subject for reflection how we can best assist in temporal necessities, and how we can further spiritual interests. There is, perhaps, nothing so likely to chasten our own hearts, and bring to remembrance the uncertainty of life, as witnessing the sufferings of the sick and dying, the privations of the poor, and the misery which sin has brought into the world; these scenes soften the soul, and draw forth many a prayer to be reminded of our end. Be not discouraged, dear ——, under any sense of your insufficiency for the work. God often works by feeble means, that He may be glorified. To every one who desires to serve Him, and who feels at the same time her great need of help from above, you know there is a most gracious promise in 2 Cor. xii. 9. If an old, experienced, but sadly-deficient, visitor, may be allowed to give a word of advice, I would say, Never enter upon your work without seeking first, in your private chamber, for the help of God the Holy Spirit, and His blessing. So, let the tracts

be given in an humble dependence upon His divine blessing. As occasion may serve, to the sick or aged read a portion of God's Word. To encourage you to do this, you have the promise, "My word shall not return unto me void." You will find Psalms xxv., xxxii., li., lxxxvi., cxxxix, and many others; also Matt. v., vi., vii.; Luke vii., xii., xiii.; and John i., iii., vi., very useful. I only enumerate a few, but you cannot read a chapter that does not tell of the mercy and grace of Christ, His willingness to receive sinners, or the danger of neglecting this great salvation. Thus labouring, dear ——, may you find your own soul abundantly watered, your heart and affection set on things above; and may you feel in your own happy experience, that His service is perfect freedom. Nothing, I think, rejoices me more than to hear of the welfare of my former pupils. My heart's desire, and prayer for all is, that they may be saved.—Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

## LII. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ——,—As one who has long experienced the tender forbearance, long-suffering, patience, and overflowing mercies of our reconciled God and Father in Christ Jesus, I ought to be able to give some words of advice to a younger traveller on this narrow path,—a path of peace, nevertheless, and the end of which is eternal life; and, if God will graciously direct, I feel that He will enable me to speak a word in season.

In the arduous warfare in which you are engaged, dear ——, I would have you remember the Apostle's admonition, "Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." In *duty*, look up to Him for strength and direction. "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress," so let your eyes wait upon the Lord your God; and let your sincere and daily inquiry

be, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" In *difficulties*, remember, your Saviour is the wonderful "Counsellor," ever ready to help you: in *distresses*, the Head who sympathises with His members, the High Priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities, the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him," and "as one whom his mother comforteth, so will He comfort you." Therefore, dear young friend, be of good cheer; dark indeed have been the clouds that have hung over you; but they were permitted by your heavenly Father, not to overwhelm you by the fearful storm and tempest, but to lead you to take refuge in the Rock of ages, and, under the shelter of His wings, to find a peace which the world can neither give nor take away. Better, far better, to suffer affliction with the people of God, and to feel that affliction so blessed as to draw you nearer to God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and then perish for ever. I hope — may have been led by her heavy trials to Him who alone can support her under them, and sanctify them to her soul's everlasting welfare, then will she be able to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted;" "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou of very faithfulness hast afflicted me." I do not know whether she has ever seen that little book, "Cecil's Visit to the House of Mourning:" my dear mother thought much of it, and often recommended it to the mourner. . . .—I am, dear —, yours, &c.

## LIII. TO A SISTER.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR —,— . . . . This may be the last time this year that I write to you; and I feel I ought not to let the opportunity pass without speaking of the importance of earnestly seeking, by prayer and the study of God's Word, to find that narrow path which leads to heaven;



that so, when, as it regards us, "time shall be no longer," we may be found numbered among the children of God, and have our portion with them for ever. When our Lord left this world to return to His Father, He graciously promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth; and He has assured us that if we ask for this best gift in His name, it shall be given. Then, dear sister, let us not be satisfied with a few faint desires or occasional prayers, but let us plead, as for our life, that God would graciously give us His Holy Spirit for His dear Son's sake;—that in a matter of such infinite moment we may make no mistake, but have an assured hope,—a well-grounded confidence—of being accepted in Christ;—that our many sins are all pardoned through His great atonement, and that our hearts are made new by His Spirit. How soon will all worldly trials pass away! Eternity! How shall I spend it? is the momentous question that we should pray might be brought home to our hearts; for, compared with eternity, what are the most important things relating to this life only? A mere atom. This life is of consequence only as the time in which we are to seek salvation. Should we let it pass without having accomplished this great end, how wretched we shall be! But I hope, dear sister, that we do feel something of the value of the soul, something of our need of a Saviour, and that to be found accepted in Him is our one great desire. Let us cherish it more and more; and, as it rises in our hearts, let us turn it into a prayer, "Lord, visit me with thy salvation. Teach me thy way. Unite my heart to fear thy name." Do you not find many suitable prayers in the Psalms? It may be called the Christian's Prayer-book. Many have experienced its value as such. What greater blessing can I ask for you, and your husband, and those dear to us, than an interest in this great salvation, and a heart weaned from the world,—not entangled by its cares, but set on things above, ever feeling, amidst the trials and perplexities of life, that "one thing is needful?" One of

our dear mother's favourite hymns, you know, began thus—

“When I can read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies,  
I'll bid farewell to every fear,  
And wipe my weeping eyes.”

She had many trials and difficulties to contend with ; but, amidst them all, she felt the importance of the salvation of her never-dying soul, and never seemed to lose sight of that. May we, her children, follow her as she followed Christ, and at last be with her where He is for ever.—Believe me, dear ——, your affectionate sister.

LIV. TO THE SAME.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ——,— . . . . There is one topic deeply interesting to us both. I mean the great salvation which is provided for us, and the necessity and blessedness of having an interest in it. That it is very necessary to us especially, arises from the consideration that we are each day fast drawing nearer to eternity ; and although the young may presume on many years before them, which may be a vain hope, yet we cannot look for this. Besides, there is a blessedness in the service of Christ, of which we deprive ourselves as long as we remain halting between two opinions, and do not yield ourselves entirely to Him who has bought us with His blood. It is a mercy that we have to do with a willing God and an able Saviour—one who chides those who neglect Him. He says—“Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life ;” but He never yet did, and He never will, chide the poor sinner that comes to Him. On the contrary, He says—“Him that cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out.” Only, sister, we must make haste, for the time is short,—the day of our life is far spent, “the night is at hand.” “Behold, *now* is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day of salvation.” I feel much cheered about you, dear ——,

when I remember that God has graciously assured us that those who seek shall find, and that to those who knock it shall be opened; and I hope that you will daily and earnestly seek for that Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, who will guide every sincere seeker into the way of peace. It is a *continued* seeking that is implied, for we daily need renewing in the spirit of our minds. We must not knock, as it were, and go away, but knock constantly at mercy's door until it is opened to us. And every day must find us knocking again, for we daily need mercy, and our heavenly Father will never reproach us for coming too often. "He giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not." . . . —Your affectionate sister.

## LV. TO A BROTHER.

SPALDING, *November 27, 1822.*

DEAR —,—,—I begin my correspondence to a dear brother on that—to us memorable—day that deprived us of a beloved parent; nor do I think we ought to let it pass unnoticed, without offering our praises to Him who has fulfilled His gracious promise, and for these nineteen years has been a husband to the widow, and "a father to the fatherless," even "God in His holy habitation." . . . I met with a remark in Cecil's Remains which I thought very suitable to you, and have copied it for your perusal:—"Difficulties often arise in respect to the observance of the Sabbath. I tell conscientious persons, if you have the spirit of Christianity, and are in an employment contrary to it, you will labour to escape from it; and God will open your way. If such a man's heart be right, he will not throw himself out of employment the first day he suspects himself to be wrong, but he will pray and wait till his way be opened before him. 'I was in the spirit on the Lord's-day,' seems to be the soul of the Christian Sabbath. Be in the spirit; God will bless you. Bend not to what is wrong." If, my dear —,—, you do not attend to this matter at once, our hearts are naturally

so prone to evil, that what at first appears shocking, from constantly recurring, loses its terror ; and, in time, growing familiar with it, we think no more of its sinfulness. May Infinite Wisdom remove every difficulty ; may He rejoice over you to do you good ; may He direct you by His counsel here through this wilderness, and finally receive you to glory. Only fear not ; remember, greater is He that is for you than all that are against you. Faithful among the faithless, stand. Fight manfully the good fight of faith ; and then, when the last conflict is over, heaven's gate shall be open to you, through the merits of that Saviour in whom you trusted. Here we are parted, and meet with many difficulties ; but there, being of one heart and one voice, we shall, I trust, unite together (never more to separate) in the praises of Him who hath loved us with an everlasting love, and with loving-kindness hath drawn us. . . .—Your affectionate sister.

The following letter, written to a young niece, affords an illustration of the easy manner in which she sought to render her correspondence with her youngest friends profitable :—

## LVI.

DEAR P——,—As you have never been to London, and are now, in the wise arrangement of your heavenly Father, kept from travelling even from your own fireside, I think it may amuse you to read Old Humphrey's remarks on that great city. A Christian views all its turmoil, bustle, and sights, with a very different eye to that of the mere man of the world. If he looks at it in the light of eternity, he must feel, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." It is far more profitable for the soul to be kept from its vanities ; at the same time, when duty calls, we may go in safety, relying on the strong for strength. Miss —— left us yesterday. She said she always dreaded leaving school, she feared she would meet with so many snares ;

but I reminded her she had a Friend to whom she might always go for counsel and strength. What a privilege it is, dear P——, that we may take all our little cares to Him as well as our great ones, knowing that He will condescend to listen to the prayers of a little girl, even to little P——'s, when she lifts up her heart to Him. Oh! I hope you do pray to Him, when no eye sees but His. I am so glad to hear that you are better. I hope, if it be the Lord's will, you will continue daily gaining strength. He gives it you in such measure as He sees good. But I have much to do, so must end.—Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

The letter we next introduce was written to another niece. It manifests that earnest anxiety for her consistency of life, and continual dependence upon Jesus, which appears in almost all her letters to those whose early training was intrusted to her:—

## LVII.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ——,— . . . . I am glad such a pleasant prospect is before you. The society of really Christian friends is very profitable; and this society you will enjoy both at H—— and R——, whilst dear —— is so kind and thoughtful that she will not ask you to join in any of those worldly amusements which might prove a snare to you, though I have a good hope—I may say, I am almost sure—you would not join in them, though you were tempted. Still, dear ——, I can speak from experience that visiting from place to place is apt to unsettle the mind, as the needle in the compass, when shaken, momentarily turns aside from its mark; and therefore it calls for much watching, and an earnest striving to cleave close to Jesus, amidst abounding distractions.

It is our comfort to know that He changes not—that

He ever lives to intercede—that He knows our weakness and proneness to turn aside, and that He says to us, if we have truly given up our hearts to Him, “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.” It is important, by rising early, to secure the needed leisure for reading and prayer; and this victory, as regards rising early, you have, I think, gained over yourself. On looking over your letter to me, I observe that you feel the difficulty, which every one who desires earnestly to walk in the narrow way, has to contend with. Even St Paul complained, “When I would do good, evil is present with me.” May we not be thus allowed to feel our own weakness, that we may the more continually look to Christ?

The position of the Church coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved, marks also the position of every child of God; and blessed is it to feel that need of help, if it leads us to Jesus. The conflict must continue even until death; but, seeing that “help is laid upon one that is mighty,” we may patiently run our appointed race, assured that *through Christ* we shall be more than conquerors.

Were there no fountain near, where we may daily cleanse our guilty souls from their daily defilement, we might well be cast down; were there no Almighty Comforter, promised to uphold and guide us into all truth, we might be ready to give up in despair; but seeing that there is a “fountain opened for sin and uncleanness;” and that our Saviour has graciously assured us that the Holy Spirit would be given to every seeking, praying child of Adam, let it be ours to leave no stain of sin for a moment on the conscience, and to seek earnestly and constantly for the indwelling of the Spirit of truth.

Then shall we find, notwithstanding the trials of the way from inbred sin, the world, and Satan, that Jesus keeps the soul in peace that is stayed on Him. . . . —I am, dear —, yours, &c.



## LVIII. TO A NIECE ON LEAVING SCHOOL.

MELTON, Dec. 15, 1848.

DEAR ———,—I always feel interested in the welfare of my pupils, and not the less when they have ceased to be such; how much greater interest must I then feel in one endeared to me by the closer ties of relationship?

Impelled by the desire of being yet useful to you in the new and untried path on which you are entering, I prefer writing to speaking to you, because I can better think upon what I wish to say, though, when the thought of *all I would say*, presses upon me, I feel that I have neither time nor space to express it. It is cheering to reflect that you will have no lack of good advice, that you will have many helps on your perilous journey; you are, indeed, favoured above many, and may well say, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places."

Yet this very fact increases your responsibility, and your heavenly Father may justly look for much fruit from a plant that He has fenced in and tended with so much care. With respect to the "one thing needful," you will find the counsel I would give you summed up in David's advice to Solomon, (1 Chron. xxviii. 9.) I doubt not that love will dictate to your own heart the dutiful submission, the watchful attention, the cheerful obedience your beloved parents so justly claim at your hands, yet there will be the inward struggles of self-will, when their wishes are opposed to yours, which will arise, and which, I trust, you will carefully watch against; and be assured, dear ———, there will always be more real pleasure in cheerfully abandoning your own will to meet their wishes, than in the fullest indulgence of your own desires. The disciple of Christ *must deny himself*, and difficult as we should find this to do in our own strength, we are graciously encouraged by the assurance that grace sufficient will be given.

Let love, and a desire to promote their happiness and comfort, mark all your intercourse with your dear brothers and friends. Think of the apostolic rule, "Look not every one on his own things, but every one, also, on the things of others." Remember, you are not your own, you are "bought with a price;" therefore, study to shew your grateful love to Him who purchased you with His own blood, by seeking in every way to promote His cause in the world as far as you have time, ability, and opportunity. Let a portion of your time be daily employed for the good of others; and it is a good plan to set apart a certain sum from your pocket-money for religious and benevolent purposes. These hints I throw out, but would by no means dictate to you. Make your parents the sharers of all your thoughts, as they do assuredly share all your joys and sorrows, so far as they know them. I could write much more, but one simple rule may serve to guide you in all things. Always think, speak, and act, as remembering that the eye of your heavenly Father is upon you. Seek His blessing on *all* you do; go to no place, and join in no society, where you cannot look up to Him for His approving smile. "In His favour is life." The nearer you live to Him, the happier you will be. Be daily diligent in prayer, and in reading His Word; and be in the frequent practice of self-examination, seeking help, as David did, (Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24,) against the deceitfulness of a treacherous heart.

And now, dear ——, I commend you to His gracious keeping, who has declared, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." May He guide you by His counsel, and afterwards receive you to glory! I shall always be glad to hear from you. The remembrance of you, as a pupil, will be pleasant; and to know that you have by grace chosen the narrow path which leads to life, and that you are a comfort to your parents, as well as a useful member of society, will be heart-cheering. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."—Your affectionate aunt.

## LIX. TO THE SAME.

CLIFTON, July 10, 1852.

DEAR ——,—I am glad you like the little book.\* I think it desirable to read the whole Word of God. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God,” &c, and therefore all ought to be read. Those portions which appear only to contain a list of names, may yet, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, bring to the mind some instructive lesson connected with the persons whose names are mentioned. Gen. v., *e.g.*, may suggest the important lesson, “We, too, must die; and a few years hence, all that may be remembered of us may be found on the grave-stone—the day of our birth and of our death.” † But in that chapter Enoch’s bright example is set before us. The list of names inscribed in the Word of God, may suggest the earnest prayer, that our names may be written in the Lamb’s book of life. Also, in turning over the chapters as a list of names merely, we are in danger of overlooking some important lessons, such as that about the Hagarines, (1 Chron. v. 10, 19, 20, where they are called “Hagarites;”) the prayer of Jabez, (1 Chron. iv. 9, 10,) &c.

A Bible with references is very valuable. A good old clergyman who has been spending the day here, related an anecdote of a gentleman, who asked his son-in-law, “How is it that you understand the Bible so much better than I do?” “Because I never read the Bible without, first praying for *grace* to understand it,” was the reply. The gentleman followed the example of his son-in-law, and, like him, found a blessing in the practice. With regard to the happy meeting you have lately enjoyed, I can only quote Mr ——’s prayer, as my desire for you all, “That you may dwell in Christ, and so dwell in love and

\* A calendar, with a table of chapters, for each day’s reading.

† The remains of Miss Bennett, and of this niece, lie in the same vault, with their names, &c., inscribed on the same stone.

peace, and finally, dwell together in glory." . . . .—Your affectionate aunt.

The letters with which we conclude this chapter will serve as illustrations of the conscientious manner in which she endeavoured to fulfil the duties devolving upon her as a Sponsor, and of the simplicity and clearness with which she could correspond with the young upon the most important subjects:—

## LX.

MELTON.

DEAR ——,—I wish you many happy returns of your birthday; and, together with my good wishes, I send you a little book, which will, I hope, both amuse and instruct you. I was thinking that, as you are my godson, I ought to give you a little advice; although you have such kind, careful parents, that it hardly seems necessary. But when you were baptized, your godfathers and I made certain promises *for you*, of which I think I ought sometimes to remind you. You will find them in the second answer in the Church Catechism, which, I daresay, you can repeat tolerably well.

I promised that *you* "should renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil." To "renounce," is to give up, to forsake, to have nothing to do with. By "the world," is meant, all in it that is sinful,—all those things which are contrary to God's commandments. The school is like a little world to you; you must not listen to, or have anything to do with, boys who would persuade you to do what you know is wrong. You must always try to remember, wherever you are, at school or at home, that the eye of God is upon you, and you must always try and do what would please Him. But you have within you a sinful heart, and this is what is meant by "the flesh." Now, this too, you must give up. You

must pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." When a sinful desire,—a wish to do what you know is wrong,—arises in your mind, you must put it away, you must not yield to it. Satan is your great enemy, who wishes to make you wicked and unhappy, like himself; now, you must not give way to his temptations, when he tempts you to tell an untruth, or to be angry, or to do any wicked thing.

I think you would be tired, if I were to write a great deal about what I promised you should *believe*; but, it is all found in the Bible, and I hope you read that Holy Book. I should wish you to be like young Timothy, who knew the Scriptures from his youth, and so would your kind father and mother.

And lastly, I promised that you should "keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life." What a happy boy, what a happy man, you would be, if you did this! But although we cannot do it perfectly, if we love our gracious Saviour, who died for us, we shall *try* to do all we can to please Him. We shall wish to serve and obey Him more and more, and we shall ask Him to give us His Holy Spirit to enable us to do so. Prayer, you must know, is asking God for what we want. Now, we want to be made holy and happy. Perhaps you already know that little prayer, "O Lord, give me Thy Holy Spirit for Christ's sake, and make me Thy child for ever." I hope you will use it every night and morning with your other prayers, and try to think about it, and wish for it as you say the words.

I have written all this, because, now that you are eleven years old, you are old enough to know what sin is, and to hate it; and to know something of the many things God has done for you, and to love Him. May He give you such a heart, and teach you to "remember your Creator in the days of your youth." Look at 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; that is the birthday wish for you of

Your affectionate Godmother.

## LXI. TO THE SAME.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ——,—I hope you will receive this on your birthday ; and accept my best wishes that you may live to see many happy returns of it. We are not left in ignorance as to the only way by which we may secure, not only happy birthdays, but days of peace and heart-happiness all the year round, even in the midst of all the trials and vexations common to human life.

The book of Proverbs, which should especially be the study of the young, tells us that wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." And by referring to the New Testament, we find that *Christ* is "the Wisdom of God. (See 1 Cor. i. 24.) Then it follows, that His ways are here spoken of, and that to give the morning of your life to His service, is the way to be really happy.

Happiness is perfect only in heaven, but there is a happiness of *heart*, a peace which passeth understanding, which Christ is ready to give to all, who, renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh, are by grace enabled to take Him for their Lord and master, and to seek in all things to do His will. May this grace be given to you, my dear godson. Promises were made in your name at your baptism, and we who made them for you should now anxiously inquire, Are you fulfilling them ?

In Mr Carr's little tract on Confirmation, the answer given to the question, "When are you bound to repent?" is, "As soon as I know what sin is." "When are you bound to believe?" "As soon as I know what God's promises through Christ are." Therefore, (still referring to Mr Carr's words,) I would say, pray that God by His Word and Spirit may give you *true repentance and lively faith*. Both are His gift ; and both will be freely given to those who ask sincerely, earnestly, and perseveringly for them, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The



same excellent Minister once said, when speaking to the young, "It is a solemn thing *to be born*, for then we enter upon a never-ending existence. It is a solemn thing *to live*, for on our life here depends an eternity of happiness or misery. It is a solemn thing *to die*, because then our everlasting state is fixed for ever." To this I would add that, therefore, a birthday should be to us as a hill, from which we should look back on the road we have travelled; and, whilst we gratefully mark the many undeserved mercies we have enjoyed, see whether we have been walking in the narrow way that leads to life, or in the broad one that ends in destruction; and looking forward to the future, let our prayer be—*your* prayer—"Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation."

Let me recommend you to learn by heart Prov. iv. I have sent you a book, which I hope will convey to your mind both pleasure and profit. Will you accept it, as a proof of the sincere wishes of your godmother for your best interests? May "The Book," of which it tells the story, be the guide of your youth and the support of your old age, if you should be spared to attain it.—Yours, &c.

## LXII. TO THE SAME.

DEAR ———,—Though the time is gone by when I could claim you as my godson, and feel authorised to speak a word of advice to one who always kindly received it; yet I like not to give up old customs with regard to one in whom I am still interested, so take up my pen to offer you my best wishes on the return of the anniversary of your birth.

My *best* wishes shall not be for your earthly prosperity, though I would desire as much of that as is good for you; but for your spiritual welfare, that now, in a day when so many are offering themselves to fight the battles of their

Queen and country, you may, by grace, enter the service of the King of kings, and yield yourself entirely, decidedly, and for ever, to the Lord, "to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto your life's end." Then mark the glorious reward, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be." Hear His own approving words—words which will thrill with joy unspeakable through the hearts of His people when He comes to gather them to Himself—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Believe me, dear ——, there is a blessedness in the yielding of the whole heart to God, which the world knows nothing of. To be decided for God is the only secret of true happiness. In His service there is found grace and strength for every duty; comfort and support under every trial; light to guide the feet into the paths of safety, and a peace which nothing can disturb, flowing silently as an under-current beneath the storms and tempests of a world of trial and sorrow. The older you grow the more do the world and its snares thicken around you, and shielded and cared for as you have been and still are by anxious, affectionate parents, you need a mightier protection than their fondest love could throw around you, even the shelter of *His* wings, who invites you to take refuge there, and who has caused it to be written for your encouragement, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."—Yours, &c.

LXIII. TO MISS ——.

LINDLEY COTTAGE.

DEAR ——, I feel called upon as your godmother to write to you, more especially at this time, when you are invited by the church, of which you are privileged to be a member, to ratify and confirm the promises made for you in the days of your infancy. I united with your dear parents in presenting you to the Lord, praying with them that you might be numbered amongst the children of God,

and “continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto your life’s end.” *Then* it was we promised, in your name, that you should renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and keep God’s holy commandments even unto the end. *Now* you are invited to acknowledge yourself bound to fulfil these promises, and to engage so to do, by the grace of God.

Confirmation is a deeply solemn ordinance, and one that should call forth much thought and very earnest prayer; for consider, dear —, to whom you are about to present yourself—even to Him of whom it is written, that “His eyes are as a flame of fire,” that “all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” It is a fearful thing to lie unto men; what must it be to lie unto God? Hence you will see that there must be sincerity of purpose. This is as the salt of the covenant, which the Israelites of old were commanded not to suffer to be lacking in all their sacrifices. I would say to you, as David said to Solomon, “Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”

But it may well be asked, “Who is sufficient for these things?” The deep sense of your own inability is alike essential to your coming acceptably before God, because it will lead you to Him whose strength is made perfect in our weakness. Go, then, to Jesus; tell Him you desire to be His child, and to give the morning of your days to Him, but that your heart is sinful, prone to turn aside after the world and its vanities, and prone to forget the guide of your youth—ever ready to fall. He will hearken to your prayer, uphold and defend you from your many spiritual enemies, draw you by His Spirit near to Himself, and give you to taste the blessedness of His service, which is “perfect freedom.” You will not, I trust, for a moment

suppose that in publicly offering yourself to be the Lord's, you can be doing any meritorious work ; no, rather do I hope you will feel how great the condescension, how wonderful the love, of your heavenly Father is, who thus invites you to enter into His family, and partake of the privileges and happiness of His children. I speak not now of the church to which you belong, and of whose greatest privilege you will, after Confirmation, be permitted to partake, namely, the Lord's Supper ; but of that universal family of God of which Christ is the head, and all those who are united to Him are the members. I always think we may take the words of Moses to his people as aptly representing the duty and privilege of all sincere candidates for Confirmation, on the day when they present themselves publicly to the Lord. I allude to Deut. xxvi. 16-19. The duty is manifest. It is "our reasonable service" that we should present our bodies to be "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." And who can tell how great the privilege ! "Oh ! taste and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

I am afraid I am making my letter too long, so I will hasten to a conclusion. I will try to sum up all, dear —, by saying that it is a great duty and high privilege to which you are invited ; that you need especial grace, that you may be a sincere, humble, and believing child of God ; that you must needs, therefore, pray earnestly to Him who has said, "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find." The time of Confirmation has been a blessing to many, a season of peculiar grace, a day in which angels have rejoiced over many a young one choosing, by grace, the good part which shall never be taken from them. Such may it be to you, dear —, and then our hearts will be filled with thankful praise.

"One word more," as — used to say. In Acts v. you will read of the awful displeasure of God manifested against those who came before Him with a double heart. By comparing Exod. xxiv. 7 with Exod. xxxii., you will see how vain are promises made in our own strength ; and

from Phil. iv. 13, you may learn wherein your real strength lies. Meditate upon the encouraging assurance of our Lord, Luke xi. 13, and ask your heavenly Father to send you, for your Redeemer's sake, the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth. You will find the 101st hymn in the "Cottage Hymn-Book" a suitable one to use just now. Many are my last words, as dear Mr ——'s used to be. May they be owned and blessed, as his often were, by Him, without whose blessing all our efforts are vain.—  
Yours, &c.

## CHAPTER II.

“ Comfort ye my people, saith your God.”—ISAIAH xl. 1.

### I. TO MRS ———, ON THE DEATH OF HER MOTHER.

DEAR ———,—“ Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.” The rays of that glorious “light” have now dawned upon your beloved parent, clothed, as we humbly believe she was, with her Redeemer’s righteousness; the “gladness” has now sprung up in that heart, once the seat of anxious desire to know and serve the Lord,—a “gladness” which, unlike this earth’s poor fleeting joys, shall endure for ever. Think of her you so dearly love now *with her Lord!* Could she speak to her bereaved family, would she not say, “To depart and be with Christ is indeed far better?” Would she not bid you rejoice in *her joys*, even whilst you cannot but mourn *your loss*? Surely “the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” How gradually did He take down the frail tabernacle, and thus gently give warning that she must prepare to go hence, and her friends prepare to part with her! How much mercy did our heavenly Father mix in the cup of bitterness! A kind husband, affectionate children, a faithful minister, sympathising friends, all provided by the good and tender Shepherd, to cheer and comfort her in the hour of suffering and sorrow; and to crown all, (without which, indeed, all would



have been but miserable comforters,) His own arm sustaining her, and His tender mercy speaking peace to her soul. It is good to count up our mercies, and acknowledge the gracious hand that bestowed them. What remains but for the bereaved ones to comfort one another with sweet thoughts of the blessedness now enjoyed by the ransomed spirit, and to stir up one another to follow her, even as she followed Christ?

A few more weary steps, and all the redeemed of the Lord will meet around the throne, and unite in one song of praise to Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood. Accept these few thoughts as a proof of my sympathy for you and your family in this your hour of sore trial; and believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

## II. TO THE SAME, AFTER THE FUNERAL.

DEAR ——,—Such seasons as these call for the exercise of strong faith, something like that of Job's, when he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It was in the bitterness of his grief that David stayed himself upon his God, when he said, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." "Be still, and know that I am God,"—God, not to destroy, not to "break the bruised reed," but, as the Saxon translation renders it, "good,"—a God to uphold and soothe, when man feels himself at best but a miserable comforter,—a God on whose almighty arm you may lean, and experience His sustaining power; more than this, "Immanuel, God with us,"—One who can sympathise with us—One who, though unseen, accompanied the band of mourners this day, and tenderly felt for them, as He once did at the grave of Lazarus. Truly this is a dying world, but it is rapidly passing away; and soon will that day of everlasting joy dawn upon the now mourning Christian, when God himself shall wipe away every tear, and death shall be swallowed up in victory. As one tie after another is

removed from earth to heaven, is it not for the express purpose of raising our hearts thither also? And after the first burst of bitter anguish has passed away, the soul remembers where its strength lies, and, returning again to the stronghold, takes refuge under the shadow of His almighty wings who is full of compassion and tender mercy. When your heart seemed, perhaps, almost too overwhelmed to pray, Jesus was interceding for you; and now He will sustain and comfort you, and teach you to say from the heart, "Thy will be done." Assure your dear sister of my sympathy. I would have called, but I knew you had friends about you who would do all they could to comfort you.

May you and all your bereaved family feel more and more the preciousness of the almighty Comforter, and draw from Him all the support you need!—Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

### III. TO THE SAME, ON THE DEATH OF A SISTER.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ——,—Your beloved sister has crossed the threshold of her Father's house, and has entered into that "rest which remaineth for the people of God."

True, it was through a rough and stormy sea that she reached the haven, but hers was no shipwreck. The mighty arm of her Redeemer was underneath her, and, strong in His strength, and cheered by His love, she escaped safe to land;—escaped all the snares of sin, all the anxieties of life, all its troubles and sorrows. And what a land! A land where she sees the "King in His beauty,"—where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick,"—where she has obtained joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing have fled away for ever. And, dear ——, time is rapidly passing away; soon will it be said to you also, "Come up hither;" soon will the Lord gather all His redeemed ones around Him; and then, how will the

sorrows of the way be swallowed up in the infinite ocean of blessedness!

“Though rough and stormy be the road,  
It leads thee home apace to God,  
Then count thy present trials small,  
For heaven shall make amends for all.”

One sight of Jesus as He is, the sweet consciousness of being for “ever with the Lord”—how light will this make our present heaviest afflictions appear, and how short, compared with the eternal weight of glory! Heaven is increasing in its attractions for you, as those you love are removed there, and earth is losing many of those ties which naturally bind you to it. The realisation of eternal things will make the sorrows of earth less bitter. (Heb. xi. 1.)

I desire indeed to praise our faithful covenant God for all His sustaining grace in this your hour of need. Cleave unto Him with full purpose of heart; lean upon His almighty arm; He will support, cheer, and comfort you, and (what you most desire) He will sanctify this trial to your soul’s growth in grace. He has done so already; and He will continue to do so, for His faithful promise is, “That all things work together for good to them that love God,”—not *shall*, but *do* work together for good. And, dear —, ever act upon your beloved sister’s assurance, “You *may* trust Him at all times,—trust that He hears *every* prayer.” How great the privileges of pouring out our hearts before Him!

How marvellous the grace that God has shewn towards me, in granting me the high privilege of feeding His lambs; and yet more, in blessing my imperfect, sin-defiled efforts! Surely He chooses the weakest instruments, that He may have all the glory. For the dear children’s sake, whom He brought under my care, He graciously upheld my feet, and suffered me not to stumble, and in this, I would thankfully acknowledge, He answered my prayer: but He saw my inward backsliding, my fearful self-seeking, and yet He did not dismiss me from His service;

and still He condescends to allow me to work in His vineyard. Oh! what a Master we serve! How forbearing! How gracious!

Pray for me, dear ——, that, after having taught others the way of salvation, I may not come short of it myself; but that, according to the riches of His grace, I may be found at the last at His right hand, with the children whom He has given me; and then together will we cast our crowns at His feet, and unite in the song of praise, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”—Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

#### IV. TO MISS ——, ON THE BENEFIT OF AFFLICTION.

MELTON.

DEAR ——,—Your state of health is very trying; this is *your cross*,—the very one your heavenly Father knows to be good and suitable for you, or He would not have given it you to bear.

You are called now to walk by faith, to trust Him where you cannot see Him, and to feel that “He doeth all things well.” An old writer remarks that the dealings of God with His people may sometimes be compared to the wrong side of a carpet; all appears now confused; but turn it, and we see the pattern in perfect order. So, when time with us is over, and eternity begins, we shall see the perfect beauty of His gracious dealings with us,—we shall see that every event formed a link in the chain of love, by which He was drawing us to Himself. It is better to be a *hewn* stone in the spiritual temple than to be cast aside as useless, and wheeled away with the rubbish, when the temple of Christ, made up of living stones, is complete.

The candlesticks St John saw in the revelations he was favoured with in Patmos, were of *beaten* work, (Rev. i. 20,)—or rather the type of them was, as described in Numbers viii. 4; and the multitude which he saw standing

round the throne “came out of great tribulation,” (Rev. vii. 14;) therefore, the Christian must not think it strange when he finds trials and sorrows beset his path. Jesus, who trod the way before us, was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;” therefore, He can sympathise with us.

How the dear little baby has escaped from all, resting now in the Redeemer’s bosom, (Isa. xl. 11.) I hope the fond mother can somewhat realise his blessedness. My love to her and to the children.—Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

## V. TO THE SAME.

MELTON.

DEAR ——,—I would write to you oftener if I had time, but my engagements are so numerous. We are continually reminded that we must not lean upon our friends,—upon an arm of flesh; various causes may arise to prevent them giving us that comfort or counsel which we reckon on receiving from them. But we need fear no such disappointment when we trust to that almighty arm, which is ever stretched out for our help, strong to save and mighty to sustain. Human friendship and human sympathy are very sweet, and kindly given us by our heavenly Father to cheer us in our rugged path through this thorny world; but they are sometimes withdrawn that we may the better know how God can uphold, how He can comfort when the heart is most oppressed with grief. It should be a great encouragement to you, dear ——, who are so often tried by ill health, that there is One who tenderly feels for you, who will not send one unnecessary pain, and assures you of grace sufficient for all your need.

I desire to thank God for graciously sheltering you all, under the shadow of His wings, from the fearful pestilence. I trust He may yet give you all a still greater deliverance, even from the moral pestilence which has so fearfully and universally attacked the children of men, so

that none can say, "I am free." "There is none righteous, no, not one!" "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." It is when the Holy Spirit shines into the heart of man that the sense of sin is *felt* as well as acknowledged; and blessed are they who are led to seek earnestly for salvation from its power and guilt. Then a Saviour becomes truly precious, and His great salvation all our desire; then the Holy Spirit, the Great Teacher, leads the convinced soul to Jesus, and in Him is peace. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then we are freed from that fear which hath torment, for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;" and the believer goes on, sometimes rejoicing, sometimes, it may be, mourning, because of the remainder of sin that dwelleth in him, yet enjoying an inward peace which the world knows nothing of, and animated by the glorious hope of being one day with Jesus, in that world of light where sin and sorrow are unknown. . . . .  
—Yours, &c.

#### VI. TO THE SAME.

. . . . It is a blessed state of mind to be able to say with David, "My times are in Thy hand;" that is, all things concerning me are ordered by Thee, whether prosperous or adverse; they are arranged by infinite wisdom and love, and, therefore, must be only wise and good. Could I have things otherwise, I should not desire it, because I am short-sighted, and cannot tell what would be for my good; and, it may be, the very thing I most wish for, would, if attained, be most injurious.

It is very sweet to have all your concerns in His hand, who careth for you. The nipping frosts of sickness and pain are needful to promote the fruitfulness of the soil. Our God is the good Husbandman, and He is carrying on an individual cultivation in the heart of every believer; He knows when frost, or snow, or sunshine are needed,



and He suits all His dispensations accordingly. It went ill with the Israelites when they would have their own way. "He gave them their requests, but sent leanness withal into their souls." We must follow after Christ, who said, "Not my will, but Thine be done." . . . .

Have you yet heard of ——? How you are all divided! If you are but united in Christ, the separation will be but a short one at the longest. This should be your daily prayer; for, as one observes, "Prayer has a long arm; it can reach to all your dear absent ones." . . . .

#### VII. TO THE SAME.

. . . . Doubtless there is a needs-be for the so frequent shaking of your frail earthly tabernacle. May it not be that you may take the deeper root in Christ; or, that you may sit more and more loose to the world, and live under the daily conviction that this is not your rest? I believe few could bear an ever-flowing tide of prosperity; therefore our wise and gracious God, who, in all His dealings with us, ever keeps eternity in view, sometimes withholds it from the children of His love.

Their usual allotment is, "much tribulation;" but, who would lay the storm deeply to heart, which only brought us nearer to the haven of rest? Who would trouble much at the inconveniences, or sufferings even, of a journey, when such a home is in view as that described by the apostle, "Incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away?" Rather should we set our hearts on obtaining a meetness for that blessed home, and hail every sorrow which, under the teaching and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, worketh out for us a "more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and this, I conceive, is done by the purifying of the vessel in the furnace of affliction, and so making it capable of containing that glory, which is the fruit alone of our Saviour's merits and His all-prevailing intercession.

## VIII. TO MISS ——, ON THE DEATH OF A SISTER.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR ——,—I feel desirous of writing to you to offer a word of consolation and comfort, if our God will graciously enable me so to do; though, in cases like this, we are led more clearly to see our own insufficiency. He who has wounded, alone can heal. The springs of consolation are with Him, and, from His Word, and by His Spirit, they are abundantly given to those who turn to Him as a sure refuge in the day of trouble. I hope you are looking to Jesus, and drinking in those words of comfort, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” Consider the ransomed spirit of your beloved sister, “absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” What joy, what light, what knowledge arose upon her soul when delivered “from this body of death!” Consider what it must be, to be without sin, and to be with Jesus! Many have been the anxious thoughts of your dear parents as to her companions on earth, lest they should be worldly, and so prove a snare to her; but now she enjoys holy companionship with “the spirits of just men made perfect;” she sees the “King in His beauty;” and, much as she loved you all, do you think she would return if she might? Would she not rather press you to give the morning of your days more decidedly and more entirely to that dear Redeemer, to the exceeding riches of whose grace she owes so much? Would she not urge you to draw near to Christ, to live upon Him, continually looking to Him, with the earnest inquiry, “Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?”—to abide in Christ, even as the branch in the vine, drawing nourishment from His life-giving root? Then, when the work of life is done, and the call comes to you to arise and depart, may we not think how her glad spirit will welcome yours to be a sharer in her joy? “The time is short.” All

things seem to be drawing nearer to the end of this dispensation. Yet a little while, and the voice of Jesus shall be heard even in the silent grave; and that poor body, laid down in weakness, shall arise, fashioned "like unto His glorious body," who has passed through the gates of death for us, and has "brought life and immortality to light." Cheering thought! . . . —Believe me, dear ——, yours, &c.

#### IX. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

DEAR ——,—Tell your dear sister God does not despise the day of small things. He deals gently with His little ones. Look at Isa. xl. 11. Assurance is not necessary to our salvation, but is greatly to be desired and sought after by diligent prayer, as necessary to our comfort. It also promotes our growth in grace, for the more we realise His love to us, the more we shall love Him and seek to please Him.

Yet grace is gradual in its growth—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Your dear sister must wait patiently upon God, not in the neglect of the use of means, but in the diligent, prayerful, pressing after salvation, as Paul says, (Phil. iii. 12.) Tell her to seek to realise the presence of Jesus. "Could I see Him," she may be ready to say, "I would pour out my heart before Him; I would tell Him all my doubts and fears, and surely He would say to me, as to one of old, 'Daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.'" But is He not present? Look at His Word, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," and so, doubtless, with every one of His children, for He is the ever-present God: and is He not now equally kind as then? "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Let her not lose sight of this blessed truth, that He came "to seek and to save that which was lost." By His chastening hand He has drawn her aside from a vain world to commune with her own heart and be still,

and He will save her. Let her only put herself into His hands, saying, "Lord, save, or I perish;" let her come to Him as the good and never-failing Physician, who will heal all her diseases, and grant her the blessing of spiritual health, begun now, made perfect hereafter in heaven; neither let her be cast down by the variation of her feelings, for they form part of the discipline by which her heavenly Friend is preparing her for Himself. She is thus learning her own weakness, that she may lean more on His strength—her own imperfections and shortcomings, that she may trust the more simply to His perfect atonement. Doubtless, she can even now say, "Nothing in my hand I bring." May the case of your dear sister lead us all to see that our life is but as a vapour, and that "one thing is needful." . . . —Yours, &c.

#### X. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR ———,—I have heard from ——— of your many trials, and cannot but write to assure you of my sympathy, hoping also that our gracious God may, through me, vouchsafe to send some word of comfort and encouragement.

Your dear mother's death, followed by family trials, must press heavily upon you, but "help is laid upon One that is mighty;" only cast your cares at His footstool, looking to Him for grace, and He will assuredly sustain you. It was not really an accident, as men call it, which caused the burning down of the house where ——— and family were. God in His providence chastens men for their good, that they may consider their ways and turn to Him that smiteth. In love and tender mercy He corrects, to bring the wanderer from the broad road to the narrow way that leadeth to life. If earthly possessions are taken away, it is that we may set our affections on things above, and I feel sure that you would rejoice in such a blessed result, and acknowledge that it was a good

exchange. Blessed as you are with an affectionate husband, and dear and lovely children, you might feel yourself too strongly bound to earth, were it not for these thorns, which, however painful they are to flesh and blood, are nevertheless a wholesome discipline, drawing you gently and lovingly to look beyond this poor fleeting world, to that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." The consideration of the holiness of that city of habitation, will quicken your desires after increasing meetness for it, and you will daily feel, that for yourself, your husband, and children, "one thing is needful," viz., an interest in Christ and His great salvation. The refreshing showers we are now having may serve to remind us that the dark clouds of sorrow are rich with blessings, and to every child of God, even the weakest, the rainbow of covenant promise seems to assure that they come not to destroy but to save. Better, far better is it to suffer affliction as a child of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are often the portion of those who have no interest in His love.

Mr —— is happy in the midst of his trials in having an affectionate partner to share them with him; but still happier, if you are both able to realise the cheering truth, that "we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities," but one full of tender compassion and faithful love. . . . —Yours, &c.

#### XI. TO THE SAME.

BIRMINGHAM.

DEAR MRS ——,—I had fully intended writing to —— shortly, but your letter containing such sad tidings of poor Miss —— seems to require a more immediate answer. It must be a severe trial to you all.

The loss of your sweet babe was a great one to you both, but the sure and certain hope of its blessedness must have been a rich source of comfort to your bereaved hearts. Now, also, if this illness should be the means of

drawing the heart of your poor child to God, if, feeling her great need of salvation, she is brought to her only Saviour, then, notwithstanding suffering and weakness, she and you will be able to rejoice in the midst of tribulation, and feel that God, in very faithfulness, has afflicted,—that He has taken away health and strength from the body that the soul may be saved. It is a truth that we often lose sight of, that this is not our rest; we are strangers, passing through a world of trouble to an eternal home. Our great consideration should be, where shall we spend eternity?

If we were travelling to a distant country, we should naturally inquire about it, especially if we knew that we were to spend the remainder of our lives there. If we knew that it was a happy country, but that the way to it was difficult to find, should we not thankfully accept the help of a safe guide in whom we could confide? And would not our thoughts be much occupied about our future home? We are wise and prudent in matters relating to this life, but alas! how many live as if there were no hereafter. In much mercy, you have, I believe, learned that “one thing is needful,” and your great anxiety is to lead the poor sufferer to sit with you at the feet of Jesus, and hear His words. He is speaking to her in His love and tender mercy. He is shaking this earthly tabernacle, that she may think about her eternal home. We must never forget that heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; heaven is a holy place—its inhabitants are all holy; nothing that defileth can enter there. Then, how may we hope to be admitted? Only through Christ. He is “the way, the truth, and the life.” If your afflicted child will listen to His gracious invitation, “Come unto me,” and earnestly seek His grace, He will give it; He will give her His Holy Spirit to guide her into all truth—to comfort her under all her sufferings—and finally make her meet for the “inheritance of the saints in light,” which Christ has purchased with His blood, and which He freely bestows upon all who believe in Him. Whilst



writing to you, my mind has been led insensibly to think especially of ——, and what would most probably suggest profitable reflections to her. With regard to yourself, dear friend, I sincerely hope strength will be given you to meet all the necessities of the case, and grace to say, with one of old, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." I am glad you have so kind a friend in your minister. May he be a means, in the hand of God, of ministering instruction and true comfort to the invalid. I remember a good clergyman once remarked, "It is always a token for good, when God sends His ministers to any one." In these days of heresy, when false doctrines abound, it is a great blessing to have a pastor who will lead his people simply to Christ for salvation. . . .  
—Yours, &c.

## XII. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR ——,—Larne school seems to be going on satisfactorily—the numbers increasing. The young persons, who have been educated there, are, many of them, doing well; and one dear little girl died lately, rejoicing in her Saviour's love, and happy in the prospect of being with Him. But to turn from this subject to yourself, dear ——, and what shall I say?

The Word of God says, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law;" and surely those whom God declares to be "blessed" must be so; yet no affliction, "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Look at the company of the redeemed around the throne. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." It is the way marked out and trodden by Him who was, for our sakes, "a man of sor-

rows, and acquainted with grief." How many have trodden this path, and found a sacred blessedness therein; even the comforting, sustaining grace of their sympathising High Priest, whose eye is ever upon His people, and whose arm ever upholdeth them. Doubt not, then, dear —, that the Saviour, in His faithfulness, love, and tender mercy, thus from time to time shakes your earthly tenement, that you may more fully realise that here you have no continuing city, that your heart and best affections may be drawn *homewards* to that happy land where weakness and fainting, sin and sorrow, are unknown; where "there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God, and of the Lamb, shall be in it, and his servants shall serve Him." Here, it may be, through the weakness of the body, you cannot pray to Him or praise Him as you would; but remember the words of Jesus, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Do they not plainly point out to us the tender compassion of our God? "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." . . . —Yours, &c.

## XIII. TO THE SAME.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR —,—,—I was sorry to find that you have again become so delicate; yet why should I feel regret? Is it not your heavenly Father's will? And does He not know what is best for you? Oh! let us be content humbly to leave ourselves and our friends in His hands, gratefully acknowledging the watchful care which is thus continually pruning the branches of His vine, that they may bring forth much fruit. I dare say you know that hymn beginning—

"Father, whate'er of earthly bliss," &c.,

and I fully believe it is your heart's desire to realise the blessedness of the state of mind prayed for therein, "submitting yourself wholly to His holy will and pleasure," as

in the beautiful language of our Communion Service. Indeed, I know no state of mind more desirable, more bordering on Christian perfection, than to be able to "lie passive in our Father's hands, and know no will but His." With regard to securing the services of a young person to help you in the care of your dear little ones, I would remind you that this care, as well as every other, you may cast upon Him who careth for you. You know who has said, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." All events are in His hand, all hearts under His control. Seek of Him, in earnest prayer, the friend you need, and look confidently for an answer, not neglecting the best means in your power to secure this much-needed comfort. . . .—Yours, &c.

## XIV. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

MELTON.

DEAR MRS ———,—It is long since I wrote to you, yet I believe you are in my debt; however, I will not mind that, but rather employ the present leisure in talking with you on *the one subject*, trusting that the dew of the divine blessing may render our correspondence mutually beneficial. Although so much my junior in years, I believe you have been more sharply tried than I have. He who knows what is in us, appoints our trial, its severity and duration; and all things are ordered by that love which seeks our good, and are proportioned to the grace given. It is our wisdom to look above second causes, to consider who sends, or who permits, and why? When trouble comes, think, "This is a message from my Father, what would He have me to do? What grace do I especially need to prove myself His child? Let me seek it of Him; assuredly it will be given." Our hearts are so prone to wander from Him, that we continually need some special messenger, whether it be of joy or sorrow, to call us back to the Fountain of happiness. More commonly it is a message of sorrow; for, when joy comes, we are apt to be

engrossed with it, and ungratefully forget who sends it ; but we love not the cup of sorrow, and so when it comes it leads to self-examinations, and searchings of heart, if rightly received ; and then follows the sweet, which, at the first, we perceived not at the bottom of the cup—the sweet experience of consolation, which God has in store for His tried and tempted children. We must never attempt to meet a trial in our own strength, but turn immediately to our stronghold. Immediately let the voice of prayer be heard, and as quickly shall the reply come back ; yea, “before they call, I will answer ; while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” . . . —Yours, &c.

## XV. TO THE SAME.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have heard with much concern of your illness and suffering, and I felt the wish arising that I could be with you ; but my path is evidently now in another direction, and duty to a kind and affectionate sister, and the opening for usefulness in ——, point to that place as my present sojourn. In our blindness, we think *we* could help, *we* could comfort those we love ; but we forget that without the blessing of God on our efforts, all would be vain, and that He can sustain and comfort in the absence of all earthly friends. He has not, however, thus exercised your faith, for He has given you a most kind husband and brother, and many alleviations to which some tried Christians are strangers. I trust you have learned the useful lesson of looking on the bright side of things, and counting up your mercies. These grow brighter by contrast, and that contrast can easily be supplied, whether your thoughts wander to the bloody fields around Sebastopol, or rest on the cottages of the poor at home. I visited a dreadful case of suffering at ——, a poor man dying of cancer in his mouth. He was fearful to look at, and frequently very offensive ; yet day by day did your sister go and sit by his bedside, and read to him,

and try to lead his mind to Christ, who alone could give him rest. I hope her labours of love were not in vain, and that his death, which took place a week ago, was truly a happy release. It is cheering to see — so actively engaged for her brother, her friends, and the town in which her lot has been cast, where she is really a blessing to many, and you may be almost tempted to envy her; yet to *you* is given the much harder work of *suffering* God's will. Faint not, dear friend, He will sustain you. The more you feel your own weakness, the more entirely lean upon Him. . . . —Yours, &c.

XVI. TO THE SAME, AFTER THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR FRIEND,—I hope my letter will find you returned in peace and safety to your quiet home, with your dear children by your side, and “Christ in you the hope of glory.” To dwell much on the past is but feeding your grief, and, it may be, opening a way for the tempter. To look forward to the hope set before you, is, in your feeble measure, to copy the example of your only Lord and Master. In that sublime prayer, recorded in John xvii., we find Him, as it were, overlooking the sufferings and death at hand, and looking forward to His resurrection from the dead. (Compare ver. 1 with 5.) Your prospects beyond this poor, passing world are glorious; often let your mind dwell on them;—an heir of God,—a joint-heir with Christ,—a child of God, training up for heaven, soon to be welcomed an inhabitant there, where your widowhood will end, and your sorrow be turned into everlasting joy.

Meanwhile, you have duties pressing upon you; your children, your faithfully-attached servant, your friends, your neighbours, all call for your services; and One stands by, ready to help, rich in grace, from whose fulness you may continually draw for every hour of need.

I am anxious that you should not bring up — too

tenderly. As a boy, it is desirable that he should become manly, and, at the same time, gentle,—not rough and boisterous.

Be careful not to weary him with religious exercises. Let them be short, but interesting, carried on in a spirit of love, especially forbearing threatening.

Let them be accompanied by the prayer of the uplifted heart, that attention, and love for the Word of God, may be given him. Whilst diligent in the use of means, let all your dependence be upon Him who alone can bless them. This will moderate your anxiety, for thus you will cast your care upon God. . . .—Yours, &c.

XVII. TO THE SAME.

MARSH GIBBON.

DEAREST FRIEND,—Is the Lord's arm shortened that it cannot save? Is His ear heavy that He cannot hear? Has He ceased to be gracious? Is He not "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever?"

Then, faint not. Lean on the almighty arm stretched out to sustain you. Now is your opportunity for glorifying Him, by manifesting to an ungodly world, that in the absence of every arm of flesh, He can sustain. He *does* sustain, for He is ever mindful of His children. Cry earnestly to Him that He would glorify Himself in you. Consider, He "is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." All fulness is laid up in Him. Do you need comfort? He has promised to send the Comforter. Are you weak? He is strong; yea, all strength is His, and that measure of it which you need shall be imparted to you. Are you lonely? He is an ever-present Friend, tender in His sympathy, compassionate to His weak ones, mighty to save. "Fear *thou* not," He says, "for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will keep thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."  
 . . . .—Yours, &c.



## XVIII. TO THE SAME.

MARSH GIBBON.

DEAR FRIEND,— . . . Referring to 1 Tim. v. 3, I find “honour” means relieve, maintain. The apostle comprehends here only such widows as were poor, destitute of friends, or means of maintenance, (ver. 5.) To this is added the character of such; she “trusteth in God, and continueth in supplication and prayers night and day.” This state of mind describes that at which every true believer aims; as Mr Evans says, “To believe in Christ: ‘living on Christ and walking in Him.’” God, in His great mercy, has not, in one sense, made you a “widow indeed;” you are not “desolate,” for you have two dear ties clinging to you, and affectionate relatives, and kind friends, and food, and raiment; whilst in a spiritual sense, by taking from you the desire of your eyes, He would lead you nearer to Himself, the God of all comfort, and by embittering the world He would draw your heart in more holy longings after heaven, and *thus* make you “a widow indeed.” Look forward in humble faith to the glorious hope set before you in the gospel, when the husband of your youth, and the children whom you are seeking to train up for God, shall meet with you around the throne, and join with the countless multitudes in the song of the redeemed, “To Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”

I could not quite make out your last letter; I find there is something that troubles you. Dear friend, call into exercise that charity which “thinketh no evil;” go to the fountain of love for it, and so shall you be kept from rash judging or unkind feeling.

By forgetting our Saviour’s admonition, (Matt. vii. 1,) by going beyond our depth in judging of the *motives* of men, we bring sorrow and vexation into our minds, and, as it were, lay a train for the evil one to ignite. It is the prerogative of Deity alone to search the heart; and,

therefore, let us simply refer our cause to Him, and endeavour to view most favourably that conduct which looks dark and unkind, hoping some ray of light may shine upon it and shew an under-current of love. But, when evil is plainly manifest, then may we feel we are again taught the oft-repeated lesson which we are so slow to learn, "Cease ye from man, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" And then, too, may we feel we are called to the exercise of that love which overcometh evil with good, and that we have an additional errand to the throne of grace, even to pray for those who despitefully use us. . . .  
—Yours, &c.

XIX. TO A FORMER PUPIL, ON THE DEATH OF A SISTER.

MARSH GIBBON.

DEAR ——,—Truly, you have all much cause for thankfulness that your dear sister was so early ripened for heaven; and, whilst deeply feeling her loss, you are called upon to rejoice in her infinite gain. She being dead yet speaketh; she invites you, as it were, in the words of David, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him." She trusted, and now she is not ashamed of her hope. What remains, but that you should follow her, even as she followed Christ? He who so blessed her is waiting to bless you. Pour out your heart before Him. Tell Him you do wish to serve Him entirely,—to give your whole heart to Him, and pray that He would fulfil in you the promise of His Word, (Heb. viii. 10.) I am rather hurried this morning and cannot write much, but I send you the copy of a beautiful hymn, which I trust may cheer your heart, and the hearts of your bereaved family.—Yours, &c.

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

I shine in the light of God,  
His likeness stamps my brow,  
Through the shadow of death my feet have trod,  
And I reign in glory now.

John xvii. 22.

No breaking heart is here,  
 No keen and thrilling pain,  
 No wasted cheek, where the frequent tear  
 Hath roll'd and left its stain.

Rev. xxi. 4.

I have found the joys of heaven,  
 I am one of the sainted band,  
 To my head a crown of glory's given,  
 And a harp is in my hand.

Rev. v. 8.

I have learn'd the song they sing  
 Whom Jesus hath set free,  
 And the glorious walls of heaven do ring  
 With my new-born melody.

Rev. v. 9.

No sin, no grief, no pain,  
 Safe in my happy home,  
 My fears are fled, my doubts all slain,  
 My hour of triumph come.

1 Cor. xv. 57.

O friends of mortal years!  
 The trusted and the true,  
 Ye are walking still in the valley of tears,  
 But I wait to welcome you.

2 Sam. xii. 23.

Do I forget? Oh no!  
 For memory's golden chain  
 Shall bind my heart to the hearts below,  
 Till they meet and touch again.

1 Thess. iv. 17.

Each link is strong and bright,  
 And love's electric flame  
 Flows freely down, like a river of light,  
 To the world from whence it came.

John xvii. 21.

Do you mourn when another star  
 Shines out from the glittering sky?  
 Do you weep when the raging voice of war,  
 And the storms of conflict die?

Heb. iv. 9.

Then why should your tears run down,  
 And your heart be sorely riven,  
 For another gem in the Saviour's crown,  
 And another star in heaven?

Rev. xix. 12.

## XX. TO THE SAME.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR ——,— . . . . I am very glad you have so kind a friend in ——. I could wish you to speak freely to her of your fears, temptations, and trials. From what you say of her, I feel sure she would be delighted to advise you and uphold you in your sincere desires to follow the Lord fully. But there is one Friend to whom you may have access at all times ; One who knows the inmost recesses of your heart, and is most willing and infinitely able to guide, uphold, and counsel you at all times. Accustom yourself to open your whole heart to Him ; tell Him your weakness, your sins, your sorrows. “He giveth power to the faint ; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” Plead the gracious promise of the Word, “I will put my law in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.” Be *determined*, by the grace of God, to give yourself up to Him to be His servant ; seek in all things to know and do His will ; be much in prayer to Him, and read His Word daily and prayerfully ; so shall you grow in grace ; and as “a tree planted by the rivers of water” brings forth fruit in its season, so shall you bring forth all the fruits of holiness and Christian love, which shall glorify your God, and promote the comfort and happiness of all around. . . .—Yours, &c.

## XXI. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

. . . . We are hoping to have our little sale \* on the 4th, that is, Wednesday week. However glad I might be to see you, I do not imagine you would like to come ; a crowd and bustle would be so foreign to your feelings. “He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence :” this is most congenial to the bereaved mourner, and most profitable ; for there it is that the still small voice of a Father is heard, whispering peace and words of comfort—“Be of good

\* For Larne School. Vide p. 95.

cheer ; it is I, be not afraid." Yet Christian communion is also sweet and soothing to the mind, for it is not good to be too much alone. There are various sources of comfort opened to the afflicted child of God ;—the rich consolations of His Spirit, the precious promises brought home to the soul, the mercy-seat, the sympathising High Priest, meditations on past mercies, quickening hope for the future, and the society of the friends of Jesus, who have learned of Him to weep with those that weep ; and, to crown all, the anticipation of future reunion, when there shall be no more death, and when God shall wipe away all tears.

XXII. TO MR AND MRS ——, ON THE DEATH OF  
A DAUGHTER.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR FRIENDS,—“ She is not dead, but sleepeth ; ” taken a little before you, she waits to welcome you. She has reached the terminus of life’s troubled journey without tasting much of its bitterness, and safe, as we humbly hope, in His presence who loved her, and gave Himself for her, she is praising the riches of His grace with an unfaltering tongue ; whilst your sore and bleeding hearts can, I trust, join in meek and silent submission in adoring the love that endured the sharpness of death to bring “ life and immortality to light.”

“ I believe in the resurrection of the dead,” are words full of comfort as we stand by the graves of those who sleep in Jesus, as we have indeed good hope that your loved one, my dear young friend, now does. For, had she given no testimony in her last illness, I cannot for a moment indulge the unbelieving thought that the child of so many prayers—of such careful training—would not be gathered in. No ! our God is a faithful, prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Stay yourselves on His word. May He who is the God of all comfort grant you abundantly to experience that truly He is a stronghold in this your hour of need. May dear —— and the others be

spared to you, and have grace to give themselves up to the Lord, so that when the sorrows of this life of trial are passed away, you may all meet an undivided family in heaven. *Then* you will see what now you are called upon *by faith* to realise, that "He hath done all things well." I am truly distressed for you and with you, for I had a double, if not treble, interest in her, as my former pupil, my god-child, and the child of very kind friends; and I believe I had some share in her affections. Oh! how glorious she will appear when next you see her! This vile body then fashioned according to His glorious body! —no more infirmities, no headaches, no pain! "In Thy presence is fulness of joy." Let us press on, that we may share it with her. . . . —Yours, &c.

XXIII. TO MRS ———, ON THE DEATH OF HER DAUGHTER,  
WHO HAD BEEN FORMERLY A PUPIL.

MELTON.

. . . . I have read with many tears your affecting account of dearest ———'s sufferings and trials. Doubtless there was a "needs-be" for them, for He who is love does not willingly grieve nor afflict the children of men. Do not, dear Mrs ———, hearken to the suggestions of the wicked one who envies your comfort; he would represent our God as a hard master, but we know that He is gracious and merciful, "slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth." He has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out." His faithfulness, His mercy, and His truth are a shield with which you may repel all the fiery darts of the wicked. When did any poor trembling soul earnestly seeking Him, yea, feebly seeking Him, seek in vain? Is it not written, "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain?" And did He teach you to pray, yea, to wrestle in prayer for your child, in vain? Oh no! you have reason to triumph in His faithfulness and love; and though He may say to you, "What I do thou knowest not now," yet He adds,



“Thou shalt know hereafter.” Yes! when once more and for ever united with your beloved child, you will look back upon the way He has led you, and you will see clearly that it was a way of mercy and love, that it was for her and for you a *right* way to the city of habitation, where the inhabitant shall no more say, “I am sick.” I always considered dear —— as the subject of divine grace, the Lord gradually drawing her heart to Himself. This illness was the means of completing the work He had begun, and now we may contemplate her redeemed spirit, and say, “His own right hand and his holy arm hath gotten himself the victory.” It strikes me as being fully in accordance with the tender mercy of our God, that whilst, in His wisdom, and for her good, He suffered the enemy to harass for a time His purchased lamb, your beloved child, He provided for her a mother to combat her fears, and to direct her to Jesus; whilst in the case of dear ——, where, perhaps, there were none around her who understood the nature of that spiritual conflict, the enemy was not permitted, so far as we know, to harass this “little one.” What a similar expression was hers to that of ——, “I should wish to die now, if I were sure of going to heaven.” Sweet lambs of the good Shepherd’s fold; I trust they are indeed there, basking in the sunshine of happiness, drinking at the source of bliss—a bliss which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.” And would we recall them to wander again on earth’s polluted plains, to be tempted, ensnared, perhaps, for a time by Satan—to “groan, being burdened?” No! surely not. Jesus has, by the voice of His providence, said, “Suffer them to come to me;” and would we hinder them? Surely, surely not. But let us remember “the time is short;” it remains that those who weep be as though they wept not; for yet a little while, and Jesus will wipe away all tears from your eyes. May He pour the balm of His comfort into your wounded hearts, and give you all to rejoice, even in tribulation. . . . —Yours, &c.

XXIV. TO THE PUPIL WHOSE DEATH IS REFERRED TO IN  
THE PREVIOUS LETTER.

MELTON.

DEAR ——,—I hear both by your aunt and my brother that you are still a sufferer from pain and weakness, although I hope a little better. We have need of patience, and it shall be given to those who seek for it in earnest prayer. This protracted trial also is intended to bring into exercise many more precious graces, all wrought in us by the Holy Spirit; for example, *faith* to believe that our most kind and tender Father is thus visiting you for your good,—that He will not lay upon you more than is needful, or that He will enable you to bear. He calls to you, my dear young friend, He has been calling long; and because He loves you, and knows that your eternal happiness depends upon your hearing and obeying His call, He has taken you aside from the busy, ensnaring scenes of life, that you may listen to the still small voice of His Spirit. And what does he say? “My daughter, give me thine heart.” Will you not say, “Lord, take it, and make it Thine for ever?” Then will you bring forth another fruit of His Spirit, even *joy*; for when you have tasted the sweetness of being able to look up to God as your reconciled Father, you will indeed rejoice. And close in its train will follow *peace*—a peace the world knows nothing of—and calm *submission* to His holy will, something of the spirit of Him who said, “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” Remember, dear child, it is said, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;” and again, “The bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench.” In all your weakness and suffering look to Him who “was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities,” and He will uphold, strengthen, and comfort you. To His mercy and love I commend you. May He abundantly bless you.—Yours, &c.

## XXV. TO A FORMER PUPIL, ON HER FATHER'S ILLNESS.

ST PAUL'S SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM.

DEAR ——,—The account of your dear father's sufferings and most precarious state is sad and unexpected, for I had hoped that he was better. It is rather singular that two of my young friends are somewhat similarly situated with yourselves. Miss —— can scarcely hope for the continuance of her dear father's life, even for a day; and Miss —— is like yourself, sometimes venturing to hope, at others ready to fear for the result of Mr ——'s long-continued and alarming illness. Truly, this is a dying world, and sad experience often shews us that "life is but a vapour,"—that is, our mortal existence here; for the life that remaineth stretches into eternity, and will never know an end. How anxiously, then, for ourselves and those dear to us, may we inquire, On what do our hopes for eternity rest? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the corner-stone, the precious foundation-stone, on which we may safely build for eternity. What you should earnestly desire for your dear parent is, the *felt* power of the Spirit of God, convincing him of his need of a Saviour, and of the exceeding willingness of Christ to receive him.

Hooker says that to mention good works at that solemn hour, when the soul may be about to enter into the presence of God, is to lay it on the rack; nothing can give support and comfort then, but a real belief in the one great atonement made by Christ. "He is the propitiation for our sins." He died that we might be reconciled to God, and He has graciously caused it to be written of Him, "That He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." As you have opportunity to read to your beloved father from that Book which is pre-eminently the *one* book for a time of sorrow, you will find the Psalms especially suitable,—the 32d, 51st, 130th, and many others; so also John iii.; Rom. iv., and following chapters to the 8th inclusive; and Heb. xii.

Whilst reading, it is good to lift up the heart in prayer, pleading with God that He would remember His gracious promise, "My word shall not return unto me void." The simple Word of God, accompanied by earnest prayer for the Holy Spirit's teaching, *must* bring instruction and comfort. It is, you know, "the sword of the Spirit," which, whilst it cuts away every false hope, will also separate from all which would hinder the soul from resting alone on Christ. May you all experience in this hour of trial, that "the Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble," and that He knoweth them who trust in Him.  
 . . . —Yours, &c.

· XXVI. TO THE SAME, ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ——,—It was my full intention to have written to you very soon, especially after I heard of the loss of your little boy; but your letter received this morning has anticipated me, and leads me at once to reply to it. With regard to your precious babe, you may say—

" My lovely little lily, thou wert gather'd very soon,  
 In the fresh and dewy morning, not in the glare of noon;  
 The Saviour sent His angels to bear thee hence, His own,  
 And they'll plant thee in *that* garden where decay is never known."

And with regard to yourself, dear ——, surely God has dealt very mercifully with you. The trials and sorrows you have met with are all pledges of His love and watchful care over you. I can look back and remember the time in your experience when your heavenly Father hedged up your way with thorns, and broke a snare which might sorely have hindered you, if not entirely prevented you from running on the narrow way that leads to life. And now that He has placed you in a happy home, and given you a kind husband and dear child, in tender love for your soul, He still plants a thorn in your nest, lest you should set your best affections upon earth, and forget that you are but a stranger and pilgrim here, travelling on to

your Father's house above. Thus is He drawing you nearer to Himself, the sole fountain of enduring happiness. The secret of a holy, happy walk with God, is plainly told us in those few words of the apostle, "*Looking unto Jesus.*" If we look for anything in ourselves as the ground of our hope, we are, as it were, looking to the ever-changing clouds; for our frames and feelings vary almost as much; but when our hope rests on the full, perfect, and sufficient work of Christ, then we have a sure anchor that enters within the veil, that no storms can move—we are building upon the Rock of ages. "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." Our faith must rest on the sure Word of God. What is the reason of the hope that is in the believer? It is this:—I read in the Word of God repeated assurances that whosoever believeth in Jesus shall be saved; I commit my soul into His hands; I take Him at His word; He has graciously promised that He will in no wise cast out any that come to Him, and "I know that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Christ is also a present salvation—His blood *cleanseth*, not *has cleansed*, but *now*, even at this present time, cleanseth from our daily, hourly sins, for sin ever defiles all we do. So likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. In ourselves we are weakness, but Christ is our strength; He will give grace here and glory hereafter. . . .—Yours, &c.

## XXVII. TO A PUPIL, ON HER FATHER'S ILLNESS.

BIRMINGHAM.

DEAR MRS —,—The illness of your beloved father must cause you much anxiety; it is a comfort that you are able to visit him frequently. Although —,—'s account was one calculated to awaken anxious fears, yet I trust that the means used may be blessed to his recovery. Of one thing we are sure, that He with whom are the issues of



life and death, doeth all things well ; and I trust the language of your hearts will be—"It is the Lord ; let him do what seemeth him good." I say, "*will be,*" for there is often a struggle in the mind before we can say this. God leaves us to feel our own weakness ; and then, when leaning on Him alone, He gives grace to lie passive in His hands, and to know no will but His. That patient waiting upon God in humble submission to His will is the most suitable frame of the Christian's heart, and that which yields most comfort.

Trials are really blessings in disguise, because they tend to wean the heart from the world by shewing its insufficiency, and they draw the soul closer to God. May this heavy trial work the "peaceable fruits of righteousness" in all of you ; and, if it be the will of God, may your dear parent be raised up again, and spared to you for many years.

The coldness, the deadness, the wandering of thoughts, of which you complain, are all incident to Christians, with the increasing uneasiness they occasion ; they prove life within, for where all is dead there is no conflict. You will have many a difficult lesson to learn, my dear young friend, in the school of Christ,—difficult, because of the opposition of the natural heart, but you have a kind and patient Teacher, who graciously assures you of strength. Go on, then, faint, it may be, yet pursuing, and sooner or later victory shall be yours ; and you, with all the redeemed of the Lord, shall lay your blood-bought crowns at the Redeemer's feet, and acknowledge that His grace was sufficient for you. Accustom yourself to look up to Him at all times. All fulness of grace is treasured up in our great High Priest, and He is more ready to give than we are to ask. We may carry all our little trials to Him, as well as the heavier ones of life. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered ;" and whilst not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice, He Himself bids you "fear not, for ye are of more value than many sparrows."—Yours, &c.



XXVIII. TO A BROTHER, AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS  
DAUGHTER, A FORMER PUPIL.

LINDLEY GRANGE.

DEAREST BROTHER,—I enclose you the promised hymn,\* to which I have added a few texts, illustrating the verses, or rather proving the cheering truths they contain. How gladly would I comfort you and dear —, but He alone who has wounded can heal, and to Him do I pray that He would sustain and cheer you, giving you daily to feel that it is only a Father's hand that is laid upon you, not in anger, but in love. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." May you both feel that gracious hand drawing you, with greater love and devotion, to Himself, the Father of all mercies, and the God of all consolation.

I thought much about you yesterday, as I pursued my journey alone, and especially was I present with you in spirit about the time I imagined you would be drawing near to your home. Your loved one is gone to a *better* home; the heavenly Bridegroom has taken her to that home, where all is holiness and peace. "In thy presence is fullness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." May this thought comfort you! God has manifested the riches of His grace in sustaining you, and I feel sure He will still do so, for He is faithful that promised, and never, perhaps, does He more clearly reveal Himself to believers, as the Lord their God, than in seasons of deep trial, when all His waves and billows seem to be overflowing, and well-nigh ready to overwhelm His children. The rainbow of covenant love shines brightest on the dark cloud of affliction.

It is in the hour of heartfelt sorrow that Jesus especially sympathises with His people. It was when Jesus saw Mary and her friends weeping that "He groaned in His spirit and was troubled." It was at the grave of Lazarus that Jesus wept. Soon He who is the "resur-

\* The same as quoted, p. 248.

rection and the life" will come again; and then, by His life-giving voice, shall He summon His own from their resting-places to meet the Lord in the air. Then may you and dear —— be found at His right hand, with the children He has given you, and may I also be a partaker in your joy.—Yours, &c.

XXIX. TO THE SAME, ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS  
DECEASED DAUGHTER'S BIRTH.

MARSH GIBBON.

DEAR ——,—At such seasons of painful remembrance as the present, may He who is alone the Comforter sustain and cheer your hearts. May the sweet thought that "it is well" with your beloved one cast a ray of holy joy on your sorrow. Hear the words of our gracious and sympathising Lord, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Now it may be truly said "she liveth." Free from sin and the snares of the world, the flesh and the devil, free from sorrow and weakness and pain, washed in the precious blood of Jesus, and clothed in His righteousness, she has learnt the new song, "To Him that loved us," &c., and has found that He, in whom alone she trusted, would not let her "perish," according to the sweet assurance of those words of the hymn, the singing of which once solaced her tried spirit. It must be now a comforting thought to you, that the birthday of her majority was celebrated even according to the directions of Scripture, not in carnal noisy mirth, but in rejoicing the heart of the poor and the aged, (Luke xiv. 13, 14,) and that this was in perfect accordance with her own heart's desire, and one in which she delighted.

Your anxieties for her are now all ended; her little bark has safely crossed the ocean of life, guided by an infallible Pilot, and she has entered the haven of everlasting rest and peace. What remains but for us to follow on? "Forgetting those things which are behind,

and reaching forth unto those things which are before," let us "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." . . .—Your affectionate sister.

## XXX. TO THE SAME, ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HER DEATH.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR ——,—How cheering is that oft-repeated profession of faith, "I believe in the resurrection of the dead," viewed in connexion with those who sleep in Jesus! Then death shall be "swallowed up in victory," and every tear be wiped away. The thought of that glorious time sheds a bright ray of gladness into the hearts that must ache, as the revolving year brings back the painful remembrance of the past, and the scarcely healed wound is ready to break out afresh. Then it is especially that the gracious promises of the Word of God are felt to contain that only healing balm which, applied by the Spirit of truth, enables the bereaved ones to rejoice in tribulation, and to look forward with faith to the coming of our Lord with all His redeemed ones, no longer subject to pain and sickness, but clothed with immortality.

I have always thought that the angels, who, as at this time last year, we humbly believe, bore away the ransomed soul of your child to her Redeemer's bosom, lingered over the cold remains to stamp on the countenance that lovely smile which none who saw can ever forget, to comfort the mourning parents by a slight glimpse of that joy which beams in the face of those who are in the glad presence of their God. . . .—Your affectionate sister.

## XXXI. TO A YOUNG NIECE IN SICKNESS.

MELTON MOWBRAY, *Nov. 27, 1844.*

DEAR ——,—Mr Carr has just left us; he talked to all your school-fellows with so much earnestness and simplicity, I was going to say I wish you had been here;

but seeing it is God's will you should not, I ought not to wish it. He spoke to them of the necessity of being prepared for an early death, and of the blessedness of giving the heart to God. He related an interesting account of ——, who loved God from her infancy, and who died very happily. He said he was much pleased with the manner in which your companions said their texts, and indeed they repeated them very perfectly, and answered the questions he put to them very sensibly. But the grand thing is to have them in the heart, written there by the Spirit of God. Would it not be nice, if you were to learn one or two from your tract every day? . . . . And now, dear ——, I want to talk with you a little. Have you ever thought *why* God has sent this illness? It is a message of love, and of much love; for it is so mixed with mercies that the cross is very sweet to you, and you scarcely taste its bitterness. I mean, you have the pleasure of being with your dear parents and brother, you have every want supplied, and you have such kind attention from those you love, that you scarcely mind not being well, since you have little or no pain; yet, even by this still small voice God is speaking to you, and He says, "My daughter, give me thine heart. You see you have a poor feeble body that must one day return to the dust, as it was; then where will your soul be? Put it into my hands to be cleansed and made holy now, that so it may dwell with me in heaven." It seems as if your heavenly Father saw that in the bustle of school occupations, the idle talk of your companions, and various other hindrances, you did not sufficiently think of Him, and of Christ, and of your soul, so He has called you aside for a little while that you may commune with your own heart and think more of these things. Listen, then, to the voice of His love, and say to Him, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth." And do as Mr Carr begged your school-fellows to do,—add to your usual morning and evening prayers these words, "O Lord, give me thy Holy Spirit, for Christ's sake." . . . .—Your affectionate aunt.

## XXXII. TO MRS ——, ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

MELTON.

DEAR MRS ——,—Most deeply do I sympathise with you and your afflicted family under your sore bereavement. It is your comfort that there is One who is not only “afflicted in your affliction,” but who also can pour the balm of Gilead into your wounded heart, and whisper the rich consolations of His Word to the sinking spirit. May you all feel that “the Lord is a present help in time of trouble.” . . . It is when eternity is thus painfully brought before us that we feel the vanity of earth, and are made more keenly sensible by what a frail tenure we hold our earthly blessings.

I trust you can view your little one as redeemed “by the precious blood of Christ,” and therefore not lost, but gone before. Yet a few more years and all these sorrows shall have passed away; and, in an eternal reunion with those you love, you shall look back and see that these were “light afflictions” compared with the “exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” the gift of a Saviour—the purchase of His blood—to all His redeemed ones. The seed you sow in the earth, (1 Cor. xv. 42,) the loved remains of your dear one soon to be laid in the quiet resting-place of the grave, will one day, we humbly hope, spring forth in the glorified image of his Lord; then may you stand near the throne, and, looking round on all your dear ones, be able to say, “Here am I, and the children whom Thou hast given me.” It is by remembering that the “time is short,” that we learn not to weep as those that have no hope; and as one tie after another that binds us to earth is broken, our hearts, under the influence of Divine grace, are more set upon heavenly things, and we learn to say, “He hath done all things well.”—Yours, &c.

## XXXIII. TO THE SAME, ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR MRS ——,—I trust you can say, “The Lord

gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." It is your unspeakable mercy to have a good hope that the separation is not final, that a few more years, it may be of trial and sorrow, and then a joyful reunion at the feet of Him who hath loved you, and washed you from your sins in His own blood. "The time is short;" you will not have far to travel alone; and yet not alone, for God is the husband of the widow, and He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

May He graciously sustain and comfort you and your bereaved family. How many dear ones you have left around you, who will do all they can to soothe and comfort you! How graciously has God dealt with you in overruling this long and painful illness to the spiritual welfare of your dear husband; so that now you do not sorrow as those who have no hope, but can commit the loved remains to the earth, in the deeply consoling expectation of seeing "this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality!" How do earth and its shadows fade away in the contemplation of eternal realities! Those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. The grave is, as one observes, but the Redeemer's wardrobe; the earthly vestments are there laid aside; but He will come again to claim His own, and all His ransomed ones shall meet around His throne, all glorious in His likeness. It is cheering for you to remember that you are invited to cast all your cares upon Him, to pour out your heart before Him—to consult Him at all times—to commit your way unto Him, in the full assurance that He is your unchanging Friend and Counsellor, infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness. May you know more and more, by blessed experience, that the Lord is good,—“a stronghold in the day of trouble,”—and that He knoweth them that trust in him. Remember me, in affectionate sympathy, to your dear children.—Yours, &c.

XXXIV. TO A NIECE, ON THE DEATH OF HER BROTHER.

EAST RETFORD.

DEAR ——,—I do feel greatly indebted for the extracts



sent, so deeply interesting and cheering. I always thought light would break out through the channel by which it has come, because —— had more than once told me how encouraged she was by dear ——'s letters.

We, in our blindness, thought he was gone to —— for bodily health, but God had, we humbly hope, a better thing in store for one so loved, even his soul's health; the end of which, we trust, has been eternal life. How could he tell Jesus all things, if he had not known Him as his Friend and Saviour? Therefore, may I not say, that while you are mourning a brother dead, angels rejoice over a brother born; and that as no shadow rests on his grave at noon in those tropical regions, so we hope the bright Sun of Righteousness shines cloudless upon his redeemed spirit, and that he rejoices in that unchanging light—unchanging, except as it reveals itself from glory to glory.  
 . . . .—Yours, &c.

XXXV. TO A SISTER-IN-LAW, ON THE ILLNESS OF A CHILD.

MELTON, *Nov. 5, 1840.*

DEAR ——,—Your little boy's continued illness is indeed a severe trial to his afflicted parents, yet we know that "all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that fear Him;" and, should it be the will of our heavenly Father to take this little lamb into His fold above, must we not, in our calm judgment, feel that "it is well." "It is well with the child," for he shall experience pain and evil no more; he shall escape all those sorrows to which man is born; and he shall inherit that better portion, the purchase of redeeming love. Should God, by the voice of His providence, say, "Suffer that little one to come to me," would you forbid him? Look with the eye of faith beyond the shadow of death. Is it not far better to dwell in the immediate presence of Jesus,—to see His face, and sing His praise, in the blessed society of saints and angels,—every tear wiped away, every pain ended? The happiest Christian here has much to mar his happiness. Sin within him, sin around him, with all its sad consequences, must

cast a cloud over the very brightest earthly prospects; but sin cannot enter heaven, for nothing that defileth can enter there. Be content, then, dear ——, to lay this little one at your Saviour's feet, and say, "Lord, not my will, but Thine be done." Grace can and will enable you and my dear brother so to do, for although nature strives in all the renewed children of God, grace must at last prevail. . . .

It is the almost general opinion that very trying times are at hand; is it not consoling to think of one of your little ones being sheltered in the kind Shepherd's bosom, ere the storm breaks upon us?

Faith must be in lively exercise now, and I trust it will be abundantly increased in you, until you can believingly say, "It is well."—Yours, &c.

#### XXXVI. TO A FORMER PUPIL.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

DEAR ——,—Ought I not to rejoice with you that our God hath chosen you "in the furnace of affliction,"—that He is fulfilling to you that gracious promise, which faith can look calmly at, nay, can even contemplate with chastened cheerfulness, though poor nature shrinks from it, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin?" Thus, I conceive, we may understand the apostle, when he said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The more the vessel is purified, the better is it fitted to hold the glory with which Christ will fill it. The more refined, the better will it reflect the Refiner's image. Therefore, "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Amidst all your trials, let the "joy of the Lord be your strength." This last text Mr —— kindly explained to me thus: "Strength for trial or work does not spring from a morose, sad, dejected mind; but from an

inward feeling of God's love, which, more than anything else, gives vigour in action and support under affliction. The 'joy of the Lord' may be joy *in* the Lord, or joy *from* the Lord. It must begin with a sense of acceptance, the removal of fear, distrust, coldness, &c., and advances onward like a line drawn out into space, never to find its utmost limit, but always something unexplored, until we are 'filled with all the fulness of God.'" May this joy be your strength, dear ——, in every trial yet before you.  
 . . . .—Yours, &c.

## XXXVII. TO A FORMER PUPIL IN DEEP AFFLICTION.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR ——,—I share with many in deep concern for the crushing blow that has fallen upon your respected family.

Truly, this is a time above many for you all to turn to God. Prayer seems your only refuge. Poor human nature would sink into dust under such a trial; but carry this your heart-breaking sorrow to your Father, and say, "Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." He can sustain, He can comfort. He can even bring good out of this seeming evil. And may He, by the heavy trial, draw you as a family nearer to Himself. May you feel that His chastening is in love, that He would wean you from a world now so embittered to you, and raise your desires after a meetness for that better world, where sin, the cause of all our sorrow here, can never enter.

Be it yours to forget your own grief in trying to soothe that of your dear parents. Read the Word of God to your poor suffering mother, and let your prayer continually ascend to Him, who ever hears the feeble cry of His feeble children and will assuredly attend to their supplications. There are cases, and this is one, in which man proves but a miserable comforter, but there is One, the God-man Jesus Christ, who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

There is a psalm which I so often read to your dear grandmother that she used to call it *my* psalm. It is the 130th. Let me call your attention to it: "Out of the depths," &c. We cannot be sunk so low in sin or sorrow, but the arm of mercy can reach us. In those depths, then, now call upon God. Press your suit with redoubled earnestness, "Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication." Consider in connexion with this the gracious assurance, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." Then mark the confession of sin implied in the third verse. It becomes us, especially in the day of trial, to humble ourselves before our God. See Dan. ix.; Job xlii. 5, 6; see also Lam. iii., a suitable chapter, in many parts of it, for you to read to your afflicted parents. Then consider the gracious assurance of the fourth verse, "forgiveness" through that precious blood which cleanseth from all sin,—with God, with Him whom we have forgotten times without number,—with Him who delighteth in mercy; and for what end?—that He may "be feared,"—not with the fear of a slave, but with the filial fear of one who has had much forgiven. The remaining verses seem to point out what should be your present posture,—waiting for the Lord in humble, patient hope; seeking for grace to submit ourselves wholly to His holy will and pleasure, believing that He will do all things well. "I know," says the child of God, "that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me."—Yours, &c.

XXXVIII. TO THE REV. ———, ON THE DEATH OF A BROTHER.

MELTON.

I hope our dear minister and friend will easily believe that his people sympathise with him in his sore trial. I went to the prayer meeting this morning with a hope of finding you had returned; but instead of that, my mind was discomposed by the sad tidings of your affliction.

Mr —— did not forget to pray first for you, that “the balm of Gilead” might be poured into your wounded soul, and that you might return to us better “able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith you yourself are comforted of God.”

To suggest motives of consolation to one who knows where to go in time of need may seem unnecessary; yet I feel I cannot refrain from expressing my sympathy, and telling you a little of what is passing in my mind. I have prayed that God would make you more and more a pastor after His own heart, and greatly bless your labours among us; and thus, it may be, He is refining His silver in the furnace of affliction, and you will return to us reflecting more and more of His holy image. Doubtless, it is through tribulation that all His people must pass to their heavenly inheritance; may it not be expected that the leaders of the flock will be called to endure the sharpest conflict? Yet the thought to them is cheering, that the more they are purified in the fire by the grace of God working in them the peaceable fruits of righteousness, the brighter they will shine, and the more they will be enabled to glorify God. The text on the Almanac for to-day is a striking one, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave.” May it be brought to your heart, with all its rich consolations, by the Holy Spirit. To our great High Priest (Heb. iv. 15) I desire earnestly to commend you.—Yours, &c.

XXXIX. TO THE REV. AND MRS ——.

LONG SUTTON.

DEAR FRIENDS,—Sitting as yet under our own vine and fig-tree, none making us afraid, far be it from us that we should forget those who are bearing the burden and heat of the day, and who may, even at this time, be hearing the sound of war and discord. Yet, dear friends, you can, I trust, adopt the language of David, and say, “Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;



though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident, the Lord is my light and my salvation, the Lord is the strength of my life." How sweet to the believing children of God is it to know that their souls are "bound in the bundle of life" with the Lord their God, and that he who toucheth them, toucheth the apple of His eye,—that the Lord is their keeper, and shall preserve them from all evil! Well may we add, "Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." . . . . In one way you can remember me, as I daily endeavour to remember you, at the throne of grace. Ask that God may be glorified in me and by me, that I may realise my adoption, that faith may grow stronger, that I may be enabled to say with St Paul, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Thus far, however, I think I can say: yet, "It is a thing to be heavily bewailed," says old Traill, "that many Christians have lived twenty or forty years since Christ called them by His grace, and yet doubting in their life." I cannot plead guiltless to this charge. The things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,—the thought of really being "for ever with the Lord,"—presents such overwhelming bliss, that, like Jacob of old, my heart faints within me when I attempt to realise that this shall be my portion. I think you would say, "Set against all your doubts and fears the full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice," and "trust and fear not." This one thing I do, seeking to "forget those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." . . . . Mr —— has entered into rest. I had a long letter from dear ——, an extract from which I will send you, as it will not only shew you her state of mind under this trial, but be an additional witness to the truth of that faithful word, which declares that "the Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble." She says, "Now, as far as earth is concerned, I am desolate and



lonely-hearted, but I must tell you that I never so realised the love of God as at this time. I have felt Him standing by and strengthening me. I knew that it was the everlasting arms that were bearing me up. Deep and bitter as the trial is, I would not be without it for worlds, for I am sure it is the appointed rod I need. Do you remember once last winter pointing out to me the beautiful hymn, 'Nearer, my God, to Thee?' Before there was a prospect of this affliction, it was often in my mind. I frequently repeated the words,

'E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,  
Yet still my cry shall be,  
Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee.'

Perhaps, had I known how great the cross must be, I dare not so have prayed; but now I thank Him who impressed that thought on my mind, and I can, in some *little* measure, rejoice in tribulation, for I have found it to work patience, experience, hope. I am afraid to express myself so, lest the next cloud that veils my skies drive all these thoughts away; but it is my present feeling, and I know you will thank God on my behalf when you hear it. I wish you could have heard my precious sister speak His praises. 'You *may* trust Him at all times. Trust Him; He hears every prayer.' This was the testimony she rejoiced to bear to all who approached her dying bed. I love to think over every expression of peace, confidence, and joy, which in the midst of severe suffering she was increasingly repeating. Profound self-abasement, childlike trust, and unbounded gratitude were the characteristics of her illness. I do, indeed, desire to be stimulated by this bereavement to more earnest diligence in following them 'who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' I mourn the sins which call for such repeated strokes, and I would open my heart wide to receive that grace which shall enable me to yield my soul, my life, my *all*, to Him who has exhibited such amazing love to me." Is it not delightful thus to see the child of God sustained in sorrow, and able to kiss the rod? . . . —Yours, &c.

## XL. TO A NEPHEW.

BIRMINGHAM.

DEAR ——,— . . . . Now that I have explained about the vote for the Infant Orphan Asylum, let me tell you how sorry I am to hear of your illness. I hope indeed that the improvement of which your father speaks will continue. Happily we know in whose hands you are, and feel assured that when the sickness has done its errand, He will remove it, for He does not willingly afflict or grieve. I remember a clergyman, once preaching on the subject of trials, remarked, "If you have not yet met with them, assuredly you will meet with some if you are a child of God." No one, perhaps, will feel disposed to doubt this, and we need not marvel if one who is to be (if it please God) the guide and counsellor of others, has to learn by personal experience that "it is good to be afflicted." I was thinking, as I was preparing to write this letter, "Well, I could preach a sermon to ——, and my text should be, 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.'" Perhaps, if I give you the outlines, you will fill it up.

First, The yoke—trials of body or mind. Secondly, The person—"man." Thirdly, The benefit—"It is good." Fourthly, The period—"In his youth." Fifthly, Why? That he may be led to God, who alone can preserve him from the snares and dangers of the way, and who has, in infinite mercy, thus "hedged his way" by laying the yoke upon him.

I could go on dividing and subdividing, like the Puritans of old, but I would rather furnish thought for your mind, feeling sure that you only need to have the subject suggested. Some time or other it will be interesting to hear the result of your reflections on the subject. . . .  
—Yours, &c.

The remainder of the letters we insert were addressed to a lady, a beloved friend of Miss Bennett's, and are a

beautiful illustration of the character of a friendship strengthened by the love of Christ:—

## XLI.

ATTLEBOROUGH, Dec. 20, 1856.

DEAR FRIEND,—I count it a privilege to be used, in the hands of our gracious God, as an instrument of guiding you to the only source of comfort, “The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” You knew full well that remedy was provided; you knew, and had in some measure felt its efficacy; but your eye had been drawn aside from this soul-reviving remedy to the consideration of your own weakness, helplessness, and sin. The eye of love and mercy rested on you, your watchful Shepherd saw your need, and He bade another of His weak and wounded ones tell you that there was “balm in Gilead,” and a great, an unfailing Physician there. Thus does He often use a feeble instrument, that His loving hand may be the more clearly seen, and that He may have all the glory, for truly it is His alone. And now, dear friend, let us encourage one another to cling close to Jesus, to abide in Him. We must not, as Owen remarks, be content with general purposes of doing all to the glory of God, but we must seek to glorify Him in every particular duty; and in order to this, we must be rooted in Christ, the living vine, and continually draw life from our root by ejaculatory prayer, and so will grace flow into our souls, and our feet be enabled to run with cheerfulness in the ways of the Lord. In looking back upon our past experience, it occurs to me that the desponding thoughts which weighed you almost to the dust, were permitted as a needful discipline, to wean you from all self-righteousness, that, with the apostle, you might learn to count it all but dung and dross that you might win Christ.

Sure I am that your heavenly Guide is leading you by the right path to the “city of habitation,” the New

Jerusalem. Follow on, then, "looking unto Jesus, the *Author* and *Finisher* of our faith," and so shall you "go from strength to strength," until, at length, your weary feet rest in Sion. . . .

I have been feeling as well as usual this week, and was privileged to worship in the sanctuary last Sunday. The subject in the morning was "Much tribulation." Trench, in his book on words, tells us that the word "tribulation" is derived from the Latin word "tribulum," the name of a flail or threshing instrument used by the Romans, and that the word was appropriated, by some Christian writer, to the sorrows and trials of God's people,—the "threshings" by which He would separate all that was light and worthless, the chaff from the wheat, and so prepare them for His heavenly garner. You, dear friend, have known something of these "threshings," and you can bless the hand that used them, in infinite wisdom and love, for His glory and your soul's benefit. . . . May "the Prince of Peace" manifest Himself abundantly to your soul, and fill you with all "joy and peace in believing."—Yours, &c.

## XLII.

CHRISTMAS-DAY, 1857.

BELOVED FRIEND,—Alone this evening, I thought it not inconsistent with the employments of this day of spiritual rejoicing, to seek to cheer you amidst the trials which may still be your portion; so I have been drawing consolations for you from the Word of God. May He who is the God of all comfort apply them to your soul.

Psalm xciv. 14, "The Lord will not fail his people; neither will he forsake his inheritance," (Prayer-book version.) He will not fail them in their hour of need; for, "He is a brother born for adversity," (Prov. xvii. 17;) "a stronghold in the day of trouble;" and thus does He comfort His people: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the

right hand of my righteousness." He will not forsake them, for thus runs His faithful covenant promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." With Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. When He afflicts His people, it is in love and tender mercy. They gratefully acknowledge that it is so. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me;"—in faithfulness to His covenant engagement, "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin," (Isa. i. 25;) "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, (the royal priesthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9,) and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness," "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And thus "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" for the vessel purified from earthly affections is more capable of holding the larger weight of glory; and the jewels, made bright by the gracious discipline of His hand, shall shine in *His* brightness on the many crowns which He shall wear on the day of His espousals, when "He shall see of the travail of His soul," in "the great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and people, and kindred, and tongues," and "be satisfied." Therefore, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law."

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessings on your head."

. . . .—Yours, &c.

XLIII.

OAKHAM.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter received this morning has caused a feeling of much anxiety; and busy imagination suggests fears which may never be realised.

and my heart aches at the prospect, forgetful of our gracious Lord's admonition, (Matt. vi. 34,) connected with the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God." How continually mercies are mingled with our trials! How cheering to trace the hand of a Father's love in bringing Mrs —— to you just when you needed a Christian friend, thus proving His tender care for you in supplying this want, and thereby giving you a manifest token that He is mindful of you.

I trust that, if it be His will, the fever may spread no further, and that the health of my dear friend and those around her may be preserved; but should it be otherwise, it will only be for the trial of your faith, and the yet further manifestation of His sustaining grace.

*Hold fast*, dearest, the rich promises of your covenant Father; "He will not fail His people." He will be your refuge and strength, "a very present help," and "a stronghold in the day of trouble."

How desirable that frame of mind pointed out in those words of the exhortation in the Communion Service, "Submitting ourselves wholly to His holy will and pleasure!" How sweet to lie passive in His hands! Yet, where would be the room for the exercise of this Christian grace, if trials and crosses were not from time to time our appointed lot? These afflictions form part of that heavenly discipline by which God is preparing His redeemed ones for the many mansions prepared for them in heaven, and giving them an opportunity of glorifying Him on earth, by the manifestation of those "peaceable fruits of righteousness," which, by the mighty power of the Spirit, are sown in the softened heart of the afflicted believer. . . . .  
—Yours, &c.

## XLIV.

WHITTLESEA.

DEAR FRIEND,—You will be expecting a letter from me, and very ungrateful should I be for all your undeserved affection, if I were unmindful of your claim,—the



claim of Christian friendship, that abideth, because its spring is abiding. . . .

I was much pleased to hear B—— read: she surpassed my expectations. What a gracious mitigation to the affliction of the blind is this wonderful invention! A——\* tells me how he feasts on the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians.

I hope you are enjoying the society of your friends at ——, and that you find your lips and heart opened to speak freely of those things which you have, by grace, been taught to feel most precious, and alone worthy of our thoughts and words. I have often felt my own weakness in this respect, and have had to mourn over the sin of unfaithfulness. I feel our only remedy is a continual watching unto prayer,—watching for opportunities, and praying for grace to improve them; indeed, I am daily more convinced that “prayer is the Christian’s breath.” Could we live in a spirit of prayer, what growing Christians we should be, and how spiritually minded! . . . I am reading in Joshua, Nehemiah, and the Psalms now. Which part of God’s Word are you reading?

What a striking type of the great “Captain of our salvation” is Joshua! He fought valiantly against the enemies of the Lord. In chap. x. 40, it says, “Of the country of the hills,” &c., “he left none remaining;” so finally will be the conquest of Jesus,—for “He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet.” Is it not an encouraging thought, amidst the warfare within, that finally all our inbred foes shall be consumed, and that, in that great day when all the redeemed shall be gathered around the throne, “Holiness to the Lord” shall be engraven on all their hearts? With so mighty a leader, so sure a conqueror, let us, dear friend, take courage; and, though in ourselves utter weakness, let us be “strong in the Lord and in the power of His might;” and so shall we be more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us.—Yours, &c.

\* Another blind person, for whom these Epistles had lately been procured from Moon’s.

## XLV.

BIRMINGHAM.

. . . . I do hope to be privileged to labour a little longer in the Lord's vineyard. I have, however, dear friend, returned humbled and cast down under a sense of my unfaithfulness, because I did not prayerfully seek for opportunities of saying a word in season to some among whom I have been; and I feel self-condemned at having said so little for Him who has done so much for me. My visit to our former valued pastor, Mr ——, and his excellent wife, was very refreshing;—to my former pupil, Mrs ——, deeply interesting;—and to Lady E. O——, in whose family I lived about seven years, a very pleasant one. She first taught me to labour among the poor; and whilst living with her I accompanied her on the same errand. I do hope to be with you (if the Lord will) about the middle of June. May we be permitted to meet in peace! I quite enter into your views with regard to your Christian friend, Mrs ——. It does appear to me that God, in His providence, has committed this His tried servant to your care, and thus gives you an opportunity of shewing your love to Him, by ministering to the wants of one dear to Him. How sweet the words of our gracious Lord, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." Have you not often felt how honoured were those women who ministered to Christ of their substance? To that, however, He now calls you: to the world it might appear a burden; to the friend of Jesus, it is a privilege and honour.—Yours, &c.

## XLVI.

ATTLEBOROUGH.

BELOVED FRIEND,—On the eve of leaving this place, I write a few lines to you now, lest I should be prevented so doing for some little time; for you know how difficult it is to secure the desired opportunity when on a visit. I

rejoice with you that Jesus has graciously manifested Himself to you as He does not to the world, and has by His Spirit convinced you that unbelief dishonours God.

This lesson has also been brought home to my mind. Henceforth, when clouds of doubts and fears arise, let us by prayer seek for grace to struggle against them; and, looking up to our almighty Friend, Advocate, and Surety, say, "What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee." We must not be dismayed if the clouds return, only we must regard them as permitted to try our faith, and fight against them. I think you have the Olney Hymns. There is one on "lightning in the night," in which is this sentiment, or rather truth, expressed,—that the lightning only revealed the objects which were really there. So, *believe* (whether you see Him or not) that Jesus ever "sitteth at the right hand of God," "to make intercession" for us, as our Advocate and Friend: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Remember, let us both remember, and rest our souls on the assurance, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out;" "He is faithful that promised." He says, "Only trust me."

I am once more about to set out on my wanderings. Will you not pray for me that goodness and mercy may follow me, and that wherever I am, I may be blessed with a single eye to the glory of God, and be an honoured instrument in His hands, if He will condescend thus to use me, of strengthening the faith of my dear young pupils, who are kindly looking for my coming to them, even for that purpose? . . . I fear it will be July before I reach —; my heart is with you, but the path of duty seems to lie in another direction, and that path too is a very pleasant one, for it is a high gratification to experience the affectionate remembrance of those once under my charge, and a far higher one still to see them walking in the narrow way; and a great privilege to be permitted to say a word of encouragement. . . . —  
Yours, &c.

## XLVII.

LONG SUTTON.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I do long to write to you myself, but seeing that may not be, I gladly avail myself of the kind offices of another. I am willing to hope that, through the mercy of God, my eye is progressing favourably, and that the dimness is somewhat less than it was; though still I feel rather uncertain about it. . . .

And now, dear friend, what shall I say? You and I are both under the rod. The words of the prophet Micah seem applicable to us both, "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." And what does this chastening rod of our heavenly Father tell us? It speaks of *love*; it says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." It tell us of His faithfulness. May we say with David, "I know that thy judgments are right, and that thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me." It proves His *watchful care* in the gracious discipline.

Let us, then, seek for grace to humble ourselves "under the mighty hand of God, and in due time He will exalt us;" if not in this world, yet in that eternal world of joy and blessedness where God shall wipe away every tear, and where there shall be no more sorrow. There may we be privileged to meet, and unite together in the praises of "Him who hath loved us, and washed us in His own blood." Then shall we fully understand what the apostle meant when he said, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed." . . . I often think how much I should like to sit by your side and have a little talk with you. I could tell you much of the tender mercy of God, and of the many sweets He mingles in my cup; but your own experience will tell you the same. . . . Pray, give my Christian regards to ——, and tell him how greatly I am enjoying the books for the blind he so kindly lent me, though I read very slowly compared with what he does; yet, every word seems to *tell*, and I can now enter some-

what into his feelings whilst reading, and do the more rejoice in having been made the privileged instrument of opening out to him and my other pupils this rich source of enjoyment. Remember me also to our Christian friends at the Bible-reading. I do not forget them. . . .  
—Yours, &c.

## XLVIII.

LONG SUTTON.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Our much anticipated personal intercourse is yet delayed for a season; but, since the very hairs of our head are all numbered, we may rest assured that all things are wisely ordered. Happy is it for us to have such a Guide. Let us implicitly submit ourselves wholly to His holy will and pleasure, with the sweet assurance that “He doeth all things well.” May He not thus be teaching us to moderate our expectations with regard to the broken cisterns of earth, and to draw more largely from the fulness which is treasured up for us in Christ. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” Let us dwell upon this precious promise, until, by the teaching of the Spirit, we see more clearly something of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge: then earthly friends will have their right place in our affections and expectations. When we are permitted to meet, how empty shall we be of all real good, unless the Lord bless us with His Spirit and His presence. Let us, then, pray earnestly that He would bless our intercourse to the mutual building up of each other’s faith, and to the strengthening and comforting of our hearts. . . . My eye continues much in the same state, excepting that I think the dimness is rather increasing; but, through mercy, I do not suffer much pain. Indeed, I could easily number the privations connected with my present trial; but the mercies mingled in my cup are manifold and new every morning.  
. . . .—Yours, &c.





APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

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### I.—WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS.

“ But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.”—1 TIM. v. 6.

“ YE cannot serve God and Mammon.” These are the words of infinite wisdom, of Him who knew perfectly the nature of the service required by His heavenly Father, and yet men are continually disregarding them, vainly trying to unite what God has for ever separated. Their consciences are so far awakened to the importance of religion that they dare not neglect it altogether ; but their affections are set on earthly things, and therefore they follow after them, laying the flattering unction to their souls, that the amusements they select are harmless, and may be indulged in without danger. There are Christians even, who know something of the blessedness of true religion, who are in doubt and perplexity as to how far they may join in worldly pleasures without bringing guilt upon their consciences. They listen to the arguments of those who would fain have their countenance and support, and thus are induced to mix in parties of amusement, where, should their Lord suddenly appear, or should He send the swift messenger of death to call them into His presence, they would tremble to be found. In such assemblies they could not lift up their heads with joy, and say, “ Lo ! this is our God, we

have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Why is it so? Why do their feet wander from the straight and narrow way? Is it not because they have forgotten to use their lamp, even that Lamp of Life, provided by their gracious Lord to guide them safely amidst all the snares and dangers of this evil world? The disciple of Jesus is required to deny himself, (Matt. xvi. 24,) to come out from amongst those who love the world, to be separate, (2 Cor. vi. 17.) The Scriptures declare that "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," (1 Tim. v. 6,) and one mark given us of pure and undefiled religion is the keeping ourselves *unspotted* from the world, (James i. 27.) Our Lord commands us to watch, (Matt. xxiv. 42.) Are we watching? Again, He warns us, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Awful warning to those professing Christians, who, by countenancing the world's amusements, lead the young disciple to offend! But should it still be objected, What evil in these things? let conscience speak, and it will tell how they unfit the mind for holy communion with God—how they stir up and give strength to the natural desires of a heart ever prone to go astray from God—how they grieve the Spirit, and provoke Him to withdraw His sacred influences—how, in short, they separate between God and the soul. Is not this the effect of worldly amusements? Is it not especially so, for instance, in dancing, now so prevalent? Who, returning from a private dance, (to say nothing of a public ball,) could satisfactorily answer such inquiries as these? Have I been serving God? Have I been seeking to glorify Him?—(See 1 Cor. x. 31.) Have I been redeeming the time? (Eph. v. 16.) Have I borne in mind the apostle's admonition to "walk as children of light?" Can I with pure heart and mind look up for a blessing on the hours

I have been spending? To the undecided, the half-hearted professor, it might be said, Is it a time for you to dance? Are not your feet standing on the edge of a precipice, into which you may at any moment be plunged, with the weight of unpardoned sin pressing you down? Are you not exposed to the anger of God, without a covert from the tempest, a shelter from the storm? "If there be nothing between God's wrath and the sinner's guilt, these may be kept apart during a time of long-suffering, but every moment they are mutually drawing nearer, this to that—the moment of collision will be—who can tell how—terrific." Then let your anxious inquiry for the future be, not how near can I draw to the world and not be of it, but rather, how far can I, as a follower of Christ, keep from the world and yet fulfil my duty in it? "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," (John xvii. 16.)

It may be further remarked, that dancing is injurious to the *child*, because it fosters a love of dress and admiration, and it prepares for the enjoyment of those pomps and vanities it is weekly (at least) taught must be renounced.

It is injurious to the *young*, because in them it is still more accompanied by the evils just alluded to, and leads to a distaste for domestic duties and domestic pleasures. The late hours and overheated frame, consequent more or less upon the dance, injure the health, and engagements are not unfrequently formed which throw a dark cloud of sorrow upon all their future life. It is deeply to be lamented when Parents and Masters set an example in this amusement, which their children and servants are but too ready to follow; for dancing extends a baneful influence even over the lower orders, as many a public-house could testify. Are we then left without any recreation, if we forego the worldly amusements which Scripture forbids? Those who ask the question could answer it themselves, if not deadened to purer pleasures by these inferior excitements. No amusement is condemned which

does not seduce the heart from God, and upon which we can conscientiously ask His blessing.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” “Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

There is a happiness in following the Lord fully, to which mere nominal professors are strangers; they spend their “money for that which is not bread,” and their “labour for that which satisfieth not.” They believe not that religion’s ways are “ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace.” How sadly is this manifested in the present day, when men are boldly pleading for worldly recreations on the day which God has hallowed for Himself. They know not the privilege of holding communion with the Most High, by public and private prayer, by reading and hearing His Word, by meditation, and by holy converse with fellow-Christians, and therefore they are determined to do their own pleasure and to speak their own words, and would fain entice others also to unite with them in their unholy purpose. But “the way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble.” Should Sabbath desecrations become the law of our land, then assuredly will the sun of England’s glory set behind the gathering clouds of God’s righteous indignation. “Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord.”

## II.—THE SNARE: ITS DANGER.

“There is DEATH in the pot.”

MY FRIEND,—Permit one whose heart has often been grieved at the misery of a family brought to poverty and distress by the drunken habits of the husband and father, to say a few words on the subject. It is written, “In vain is the snare



spread in the sight of any bird." And why? Because the bird seeing it, will naturally fly from it. Will you act as if you had less sense than the fowls of the air? Think, when you are lifting the intoxicating draught to your lips, what you are doing—you are taking that, which may destroy both body and soul. Assuredly, "there is DEATH in the pot." DRINK is a slow poison, which has slain its thousands. There is a register of some of the terrible doings of strong drink in Britain published each week in the *Alliance* penny paper. These cases are collected from other newspapers. Of course many more are never seen or heard of; yet in seventeen weeks there have been the following number of cases, with the particulars of each:—

"42 serious accidents, or cases of striking bodily peril; 42 robberies of or by drunken persons; 200 brawls or violent assaults; 73 cases of cruelty to wives or children; 138 premature deaths; 47 actual or attempted suicides; 41 murders or manslaughters."—*British Messenger*, Jan. 1, 1856.

You may not believe it, yet I entreat you "stand still and consider." Do you not remember any of your companions who have been killed by it? Could you not point out to me in the church-yard the sad graves of these victims of intemperance? And do you not feel poison working in your veins? Have you no headache, no aching limbs, no feverish thirst? If you have not now, you may soon expect them. But this is not the worst. What hope is there for the SOUL of the drunkard? God declares in his Holy Word, "The wicked shall be turned into hell;" and still more expressly are you mentioned by your character in 1 Cor. vi. 10, where it is written, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God." And again, in Gal. v. 21, we find this vice spoken of in a dark list of sins: "The works of the flesh are envyings, murders, DRUNKENNESS, revellings, and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And will you,

my friend, for so short a gratification, thus ruin both body and soul? I could say much more; I could remind you not only of your own health, which must in the end (and speedily too, if you repent not) be destroyed, but I could also tell sad tales of the poverty and distress which your home exhibits. The poor wife whom you solemnly promised to love and cherish—the little ones who look in vain to their father for bread, and who will, I fear, be ruined by his bad example. I once met with what is called “The Drunkard’s Will.” I insert it for your serious consideration:—

*The Drunkard’s Will.*

“I, ——, beginning to be enfeebled in body, and fearing I may soon be palsied in mind, and having entered upon that course of intemperance from which I have not resolution to flee, do make and publish this my last will and testament:—

“Having been made in the image of my Creator, capable of rational employment, of imparting happiness to others, and of promoting the glory of God, I know my accountability; yet such is my fondness for sensual gratification, and my utter indisposition to resist temptation, that I give myself entirely to intemperance and its associate vices, and make the following bequests:—My property I give to be dissipated, knowing it will soon fall into the hands of those who furnish me with ardent spirits. My reputation, already tottering on a sandy foundation, I give to destruction. To my beloved wife, who has cheered me thus far through life, I give shame, poverty, sorrow, and a broken heart. To each of my children, I bequeath my example, and the inheritance of the shame of their father’s character. Finally, I give my body to disease, misery, and early dissolution; and my soul, that can never die, to the disposal of that God whose commands I have broken, and who has warned me by His word, that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.”

Drunkard, this is your will.

Does not your inmost soul shrink from such a will? Yet it is yours practically, if you continue in this sin. Again, I could speak of the long bills which you have no means to pay, of the disgrace attached to your character; but you know all this, and there are times when you feel it too, and inwardly resolve to amend your ways. But you resolve in your own strength, therefore you fail. This sin is but the overflowing of an evil heart—that heart which the grace of God alone can change and make new. Come then to Jesus for a new heart and a right spirit. Ask earnestly for grace to overcome this and every other sin. Seek of Him that living water, of which whosoever drinks shall thirst no more; and it shall be in you a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Come to Jesus, He is waiting to receive you. He invites you to turn from your evil ways. “Cast away from you all your transgressions, for why will you die?” Man may reject you, but Jesus will not; He is full of compassion and tender mercy. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Only turn to Him, and He will give you strength to overcome even this sin which so easily besets you; for He is able and willing “to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him;” and there will be “joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” Be diligent in the use of the means of grace. Let broken Sabbaths no longer testify against you. Let your place be no longer empty in the house of prayer. Listen not to those who would persuade you to continue to take your own pleasure on that holy day. Have you not found the end of that pleasure to be grief and vexation, weariness of body, and an uneasy conscience? Truly “there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Sin, all sin, will in the end “bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder” even here—and this but the foretaste of the worm that “dieth not, and of the fire that is not quenched.” Harken to the voice of God, “Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.”

*Prayer.*

O Lord, who art full of compassion and tender mercy, look down upon me with an eye of pity, and enable me by thy grace to overcome this great sin which so easily besets me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Teach me to do thy will. Deliver me from every evil way, and make me a new creature in Christ Jesus. Hear me, O Lord, and have mercy upon me, and pardon all my sins, and help me with thy Holy Spirit, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE END.







B. P. L. Bindery.  
OCT 24 1911

